

Hierarchy of Needs Portrayed by The Main Character in *500 Days of Summer* Movie

¹Eka Sunu Pangastuti*, ²Afina Murtiningrum

English Literature, Faculty of Language and Communication Science, Sultan Agung Islamic University

*Corresponding Author:
ekasunup@std.unissula.ac.id

Abstract

Every human has different needs in their life. This study analyzes the needs satisfied by Summer Finn, the main character of 500 Days of Summer. This study aims to analyze and explain how the hierarchy of needs is satisfied by the main character. Qualitative methods were used in this study. The data were taken from watching the movie and reading the movie script. Some steps were used to collect the data, such as watching and reading the movie script, identifying the data, classifying the data, and reducing the data. This study finds the hierarchy of needs in the main character based on a theory by Abraham Maslow. First, the fulfillment of the main character's needs, and second is the self-actualization characteristic portrayed by the main character. As the main character, Summer Finn has experienced all the needs: physiological needs, safety needs, love/belongingness needs, self-esteem needs, and self-actualization.

Keywords: Hierarchy of Needs, Abraham Maslow, Characteristics of Self-Actualized Person.

1. INTRODUCTION

As a verbal expression, literary work has a lot of types. Some literary works are drama, prose, and poetry (Olsen, 1982:13). There is a connection between humans and literature. After all, literature is representative of life and human themselves. One of the most fundamental means to understand humans is literature. Literary work presents as the real instrument of aesthetic heritage and culture that can be studied for man's creative process. A lot of things can be taught by literature. Some of it is the diversity of notions and themes about feeling, desires, motives, reaction, tensions, and numerous occasions related to man and existence (Aras, 2014:8).

When it comes to literary work, the author portrayed human just it is. There is a lot to talk about in human literature. One of the topics that can be talked about is psychoanalysis. From various kinds of literature theories, psychoanalysis is one of them. Psychoanalysis is a theory that is noted as a theory of personality organization and the dynamics of personality that teach psychoanalysis. The close relation between psychoanalysis and literature has always been expanded by literary theory or literary criticism (Hossain, 2017:41).

With personality organization, humans have different personalities. In his study, Abraham Maslow matched personality psychology by concentrating on personal background and free will. He was mainly interested in an individual's inborn drive toward self-actualization- a state of fulfillment in which a person is accomplished at his or her highest level of competence. A human cannot avoid the needs in their life. The needs can be physical and objective needs such as shelter or other physical needs, and personal needs such as safety needs and self-esteem needs. Henry Murray said that a need is a state of strain within a person (Larsen, 2008:352).

Based on a book by Abraham Maslow, there are five needs that need to be fulfilled by a human being. These five needs are also known as the hierarchy of needs. Based on the statement above, there are five human needs that Abraham Maslow introduced, they are: physiological needs, safety needs, love, and belonging needs, self-esteem needs, and at the peak of the hierarchy is self-actualization. These human needs are correlated and usually portrayed in a pyramid diagram with physiological needs at the bottom (Baroroh, 2019:2).

The hierarchy of human needs exists in real life and exists in a character of literary work. The literary work can be a movie, short story, and also novel. The character in literary work can be regarded as a human character as a social being in real life. One of the movies which reflect the hierarchy of needs is *500 Days of Summer*. The movie *500 Days of Summer* tells us about how Summer Finn did not believe in true love, but at the end of the movie, she managed to change her way of thinking toward true love and marriage. Summer is the one who satisfied the hierarchy of needs.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

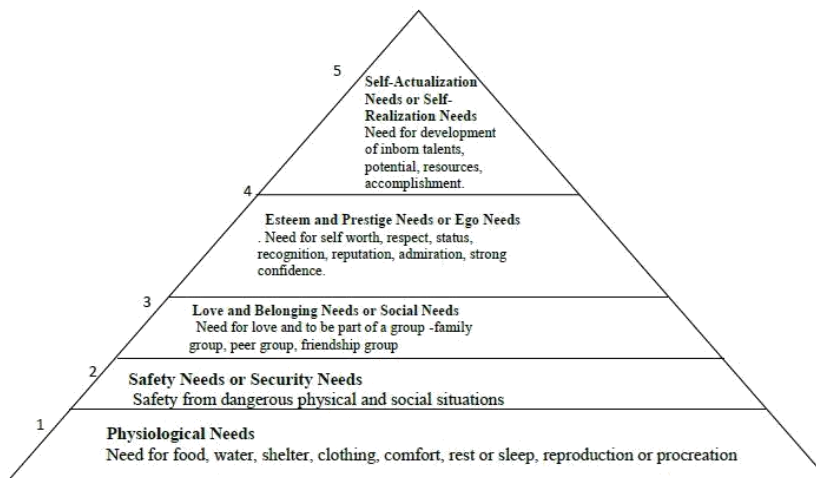
This study used qualitative research. Qualitative research was a scientific method of examination to gather non-numerical data. The non-numerical data mainly focused on explanation, opinions, impression, and explanation. Thus, the qualitative data was clearly stated by Sunday:

Qualitative data is transcripts of individuals' interviews and focus groups or field notes, copies of documents, audio and video recordings from observation of certain activities. The data are related to people's concepts, opinions, values, and behaviors in a social context (2020:12).

In collecting data, there are the steps of collecting the data of the study. Watching the movie and reading the movie script is the first step in collecting the data. Watching the movie entitled *500 Days of Summer* and reading the movie script several times becomes the easiest way to obtain a deep understanding of the stories. The first step of collecting the data is understanding the characters, setting, and plot of the movie. After collecting the data, the identification of the data is necessary. The goal of identifying the data is to find the parts of the movie that will be analyzed. The next step is underlining, giving the codes, and highlighting the data. The last step of the data collecting method is arranging data in classes or groups.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Abraham Maslow writes his book, *A Theory of Human Motivation*, in 1943. The theory he made is about how humans have needs to be fulfilled. Once humans meet the 'basic needs', they will try to satisfy the higher needs' that will establish a form of hierarchy. As it said before that humans would fulfill the 'basic needs' first before try to seek the 'higher needs', Maslow portrayed five human needs in the form of a pyramid diagram with the 'basic needs' at the bottom.



Picture 1. Source Onah, F. O. (2015). *Human Resource Management 4th Edition*: John Jacob's Classic Publisher Ltd.

Based on Maslow's theory, humans have five layers of needs. the first layer is started from the bottom of the pyramid diagram is physiological needs; the second layer is safety needs; the next is belongingness and love needs; the fourth layer consists of self-esteem needs; and the top of the pyramid diagram or the fifth layer is self-actualization needs. "At once other (and higher) needs emerge, and there, rather than physiological hungers, dominate the organism. And when there is turn are satisfied, again new (and still higher) needs emerge, and so on. As one desire is satisfied, another pops up to take its place" (Maslow, in Griffin, 2006:2). Based on the statement above, that means humans have to satisfy their needs from the basic one, that is, physiological needs, before they can satisfy the higher needs.

Five levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs have their essential role for a human being. "The first need in Maslow's hierarchy contains the set of physiological needs that important for body homeostatic, quiescence, and survival. The other needs in the hierarchy are safety and security, love and belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization are psychological in nature of human needs" (Reeve, 2004:311).

Physiological Needs

Looking back at the pyramid needs based on Maslow's theory, physiological needs are the most basic needs for humans. Maslow states, "physiological needs are the most important of all needs than any others, it can be sex, thirst, and hunger" (Reeve 36). Petri also states that "Physiological needs can be the needs for connected with body temperature directly and oxygen" (290:2003). The physiological needs appear in a scene when Summer eating in a café:

Summer: let's just eat, and we'll talk about it after. Without another word, she goes back to her pancakes. Tom watches her eat like this is the worst travesty in the history of humankind.

Summer: Mmm, you're so right. These are great pancakes!

Summer eating in café (*500 Days of Summer* 00:06:20-00:06:27)

As the need of physiological need, Summer's needs are always fulfilled and adequate. Based on the reference in fulfilling the physiological needs, humans have to satisfy the need for food, drink, shelter, and other physical need. In the movie, it shows how Summer can prepare some food for her to eat, and it satisfied her need of physiological.



Right : Summer lies awake, staring at the ceiling.

Picture 2. Summer's laying on her bed (*500 Days of Summer* 00:47:41-00:47:52)

Eating food is not the only way to satisfying physiological needs. Have proper clothes to wear every day Having a place to live and having a place to live also can be the reason how physiological needs are being satisfied. It can be seen in the movie how Summer has a comfortable bed to sleep in and has an apartment to live in it. With this, Summer already satisfied her physiological needs.

Safety Needs

The second needs after thy physiological in the hierarchy of needs are safety needs. Incident, diseases, panic, terrorism, and anxiety are some examples of how humans need to be protected. Physical security, dependency, stability, protection, and freedom from threatening forces such as war, terrorism, illness, fear, chaos, danger, anxiety, and

natural disaster. The need for order, law, and structure are also safety needs (Feist, 2008:279). The safety needs appear in a dialog between the main characters below:

Summer: I'm going so fast my feet don't even touch the ground. I'm up in the air and I'm... I don't know.. free. **It's this incredible feeling**

Summer and Tom continuing their intimates conversation

Tom: Sounds amazing.

Summer: But then I look down. And the minute I do.. everything changes. There I am.. I'm floating, high above the earth, nothing can touch me, right? **I'm free and I'm safe and it hits me**, just like that... I'm completely, utterly, alone. It's silent for a beat

Summer: and then I wake up.

Summer: **I've never told anyone that.** (*500 Days of Summer* 00:39:43-00:40:26)

In this scene, Summer was telling a story she never told anyone before. Letting tom knows about a story that has never been told before means Summer feels safe around Tom. All of the time they spent together was enough for her to share something important for her, and she knows Tom will listen to her and will not insulting her for that thing. Other safety needs also portrayed in the dialogue below:

Tom: What about you? You ever even have a "boyfriend?"

Summer: Well.. yeah, of course.

Tom: Tell me about em.

Summer: Oh no way.

Tom: Why?

Summer: There's nothing to tell.

Tom: Come on, I'm interested.

Summer: You wanna go there?

Tom: Why not? I can take it.

Summer: **Alright... well... there was Markus in high school.** (*500 Days of Summer* 00:49:52-00:50:19)

As it said in the reference, safety needs to be fulfilled when their anxiety and fears are small. At first, Summer didn't want to tell Tom about her former love stories, but she changes her mind and start telling him about it. It shows that sharing private time with Tom makes her relaxed and comfortable. She knows that Tom is one of the people she can trust and that make her easily share whatever she wanted.

Love And Belongingness Needs

After physiological needs and safety needs are fulfilled, people start to find a friend, a lover, and a place in a group (Amdt, Jr 152). Because human is a social being, they could not live alone by themselves. Human needs to find a mate, a friend, even being part of a family, a country or a society. The third level of the pyramid diagram is needs

associated with love/belonging. These needs are linked to relationships. It can be relationships with family members, peers, friends, classmates, teachers, and other people with whom individuals interact. Relationships imply acceptance by others (Maslow, 1970:43). The love and belongingness appear in a dialogue below:

Tom : This is my favorite spot

They take in expanse. Old, almost dilapidated Downtown LA. Definitely not scenic. Mostly parking garages.

Summer : This?

Tom : Yeah.

Summer : Tell me why.

Tom : I don't know...

Summer : Sure you do.

Tom : No.. it's.. it's hard to explain

Summer shot him a look, encouraging him to go on.

Tom : You really wanna know?

Summer : Absolutely.

Tom : (points) You see that bulding with the orange hue? That's been there since 1911. Over there, that's the Continental. LA's first skyscraper. Built in 1904. People think of LA as this place with no history, you know, where nothing is real. That's only cause they're not paying attention. (*500 Days of Summer* 00:36:12-00:36:43)

Summer just knows Tom not too long ago. It is a special event when she has dragged by Tom to stop by at his favorite place. With this happened between her and Tom, that means Tom was accepting Summer to come in to his comfort place. Getting accepted by other people is one of the examples to satisfy the love/belonging needs. The other example of love and belongingness needs appears in the dialogue below:

Tom: It's official. I'm in love with Summer. I love her smile. I love her hair. I love her knees. I love how one eye is higher up on her face than the other eye. I love the scar on her neck from this operation she had as a kid. I love how she looks when she's sleeping. I love the sound of her laugh.

OVER BALCK, play the opening bars of some over-the-top romantic song.

Tom: I love how I hear this song every time I think of her. I love how she makes me feel. Like anything's possible. Like, I don't know.. like life is worth it. (*500 Days of Summer* 00:13:38-00:14:14)

After the needs of belongingness are finally fulfilled, the needs move to the next layer, which is love. There was a scene in the movie where Tom was saying out loud how he loves Summer. With Tom saying that he is in love with Summer, it is naturally satisfied Summer's love and belonging needs.

Self-Esteem Needs

When Mckenzie asking about her relationship, Summer, with much confidence, answer the question with her opinion on love and relationship. By confidently talking about her opinion without being scared of what people might say, she fulfilled her self-esteem needs by confidently talking about her opinion. She does not change her mind until the end of the talk with Tom and also gives a fact to support her opinion. This shows how she is mastery and competent in this kind of talk. It depicts in a dialogue below:

Mckenzie: So you got a boyfriend?

Summer: Noooo

Tom shoots daggers at Mckenzie for that comment. Mckenzie mouths "what?" Summer sees nothing.

Mckenzie: Why not?

Summer: Don't really want one.

Mckenzie: Come one. I don't believe that.

Summer: You don't believe a woman could enjoy being free and independent?

Mckenzie: Are you a lesbian?

Summer: No, I'm not a lesbian. I'm just not comfortable being somebody's girlfriend. I don't want to be anybody anything, you know?

Mckenzie: I have no idea what you're talking about.

Summer: It sounds selfish, I know, but... I just like being on my own. Relationships are messy and feelings get hurt. Who needs all that? We're young. We're in one of the most beautiful cities in the world. I say, let's have as much fun as we can have and leave the serious stuff for later.

Mckenzie : Holy shit. You're a dude.

Tom (ignoring him): So then...what happens if you fall in love?

Summer laughs at this.

Tom: What?

Summer: You don't believe that, do you?

Tom: Believe what? It's love, it's not Santa Clause.

Summer: What does that word even mean? I've been in relationships before and I can tell you right now I've never seen it.

Tom: Well maybe that's cause—

Summer: And I know that today most marriages end with divorce. Like my parents.

(500 Days of Summer 00:19:22-00:20:59)

After all of the previous needs are satisfied, people need to move into self-esteem,

self-respect, self-appreciation. The needs are classified into two categories. The first classification is the need for strength, achievement, adequacy, mastery and competence, confidence to face the world, freedom, and independence. The second classification is the need for reputation or prestige, popularity, reputation, honor, acceptance, value, attention, self-worth, or self-esteem (Cooper and Previn, 1998:176).

Self-Actualization Needs

The last need that has to be satisfied and the peak of Maslow's pyramid's hierarchy is Self-Actualization. Self-Actualization needs combine self-fulfillment the realization of all one's potential, and a desire to grow into creative in the full sense of the word (Feist , 2008:283). The self-actualization needs can be shown in a dialogue bellow:

Tom: You never wanted to be anyone's "girlfriend" and now you're.. somebody's wife.

Summer: Surprised me too.

Tom: I don't think I'll ever understand that.

Summer: Tom—

Tom: No, seriously, I mean, it doesn't make sense.

Summer: It just happened.

Tom: But that's what I don't understand.

What just happened?

Summer: I... Tom... I just... I woke up one day and I knew...

Tom: Knew what?

Summer: What I was never sure of with you. And there's not much else to say after that.

Tom: I'll tell you what sucks, Summer. Realizing that everything you believe in is complete and utter bullshit. That sucks.

Summer: What do you mean?

Tom: Destiny, soulmates, true love. All that stuff. Silly childhood fairy tale nonsense. I should have listened to you. You were right all along. Summer takes a beat to let this hang there.

Summer: I was right?

And then, out of nowhere, she begins to hysterically laugh.

Tom: What? This is funny?

Tries to stop but only makes it worse. Now she;s completely cracking up.

Tom: What are you laughin at?

And she can't stop. She's totally lost control.

Tom(trying himself not to laugh): You're a crazy person!

Summer: You're the crazy person!

Tom: What are you talking about?

Summer: one day I'm reading "Dorian Gray" at the corner deli and this guy sits down and starts asking about it. Now he's my husband!

Tom: This is funny to you?

Summer: What would happened if I went to the movies instead? If I went somewhere else for lunch? If I showed up at the very same spot just ten minutes later? **Tom, it was meant to be, just like you said. And it was happening, I knew it. I could feel it.** And I kept thinking to myself "Wow. Tom was right." You were right about all of it. (beat) It just wasn't me you were right about. (*500 Days of Summer* 01:23:47-01:25:49)

Summer is someone who does not believe in a romantic relationship. Like in this scene, Tom said how Summer never wanted to be anyone's girlfriend, but now she is somebody's wife. This shows how Summer changes herself from someone who does not believe in true love and destiny to someone who wants to try a relationship because now she knows the meaning of love.

With all of the discussion above, it shows clearly how Summer Finn, as the main character of *500 Days of Summer*, had fulfilled all of the needs based on the hierarchy of human needs theory by Abraham Maslow.

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows the needs experienced by the main character (Summer Finn). The main character experienced all the needs, from psychological needs to self-actualization needs.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First of all, I would be grateful to Allah SWT, who give me a chance to breath and live in this world until now. Also, for the health's, strengths and blessings to finish this study on time. Second, big thanks to my parents who always believe in me. The last but not least, my deepest gratitude to Ms. Afina Murtiningrum who guided and helped me to work on this study by giving me advices and supports so I can finish this study.

REFERENCES

- Aras, Gosken. "Personality and Individual Differences: Literature in Psychology- Psychology in Literature". *Journal of Social and Behavioral Sciences*. Atılım University, Kızılcaşar Mah. Incek Ankara 06836, Turkey. 2014.
- Baroroh, Aisyah Al. "An Analysis of Needs Hierarchy in The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caslian Novel (A Psychoanalysis by Abraham Maslow)" Pamulang University. 2019.
- Cooper, Cary Lynn and Lawrence A Pervin. "Personality". Library of congress cataloging in publication data. New York. Page 176.1998.
- Feist, J., & Feist, G. J. "Theories of Personality (7th ed.)" Boston: McGraw-Hill. New York. 2008.
- Griffin, Em. "A First Look at Communication Theory". Cornel University. New York. 2006.
- Hossain, Md. Mahroof. "Psychoanalytic Theory used in English Literature: A Descriptive Study". Global Journal of Human-Social Science: G Linguistics & Education. Publisher: Global Journals Inc. United States. 2017.
- Imdb. "500 Days of Summer". Imdb.com, Inc. n.d. Web. 07 August. 2009
< <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1022603/reference>>
- Larsen, Rand and David M. Buss. *Personality Psychology: Domains of Knowledge about Human Nature*. New York: McGraw-Hill. New York. 2008.
- Maslow, Abraham H. "A Theory of Human Motivation A.H Maslow". Network of Automated Library and Archives. Nalanda Digital Library.1946.
- Olsen, Stein Haugom. "The "Meaning" of a Literary Work". New Literary History. Publisher: John Hopkins University Press. United States. 1982.
- Onah, F. O. *Human Resource Management 4th Edition*. John Jacob's Classic Publisher. Enugu. 2015.
- Petri, H.L. *Motivation: Theory and Research*. Wadsworth Publising Company. California. 2003.
- Reeve. J. *Understanding Motivation and Emotion*. Harcourt Brace College Publisher. New York. 2004.
- Sunday, F. Christopher. "Research Methods Knowledge Based : Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA)". University of Western Cape. <https://socialresearchmethods.net/kb/qualdata.php>. 2020.