

MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH*

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SUMMARY

A questionnaire was developed to measure the level of satisfaction in people of the five basic needs described by Maslow: physiological, safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization. For 166 undergraduates the level of basic needs satisfaction was related, as predicted by Maslow, to scores on measures of neuroticism and belief in an internal locus of control.

A. INTRODUCTION

Maslow (4) proposed a classification of human needs into five categories: physiological, safety and security, belongingness and love, esteem, and self-actualization. These needs formed a hierarchy, in which the earlier needs, when not satisfied, supersede the later needs in the hierarchy. Maslow hypothesized that psychological health was possible only when these needs were satisfied. The more these basic needs were not satisfied, the more psychologically disturbed the individual would be.

Several attempts have been made to measure the satisfaction of these needs in an industrial setting (1, 5). However, few attempts have been made to develop a general measure of Maslow's needs. The present paper reports an attempt to devise a measure of the degree of satisfaction of these needs in the general life of people and then to test Maslow's hypothesis that satisfaction of these needs is related to psychological health (as assessed by inventory measures of neuroticism and a belief in an external locus of control).

B. METHOD

Ten items were written to measure each of the five basic needs described by Maslow (4). For example, physiological, "I get an adequate amount of

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rest"; safety and security, "I think that the world is a pretty safe place these days"; belongingness, "I feel rootless"; esteem, "I feel dissatisfied with myself much of the time"; self-actualization, "I have a good idea of what I want to do with my life."¹

The questionnaire was given anonymously to 166 undergraduate students. Of these, 66 completed the Eysenck Personality Inventory (2), which provides measures of neuroticism and extraversion; 88 completed, instead, a locus of control scale (3), which provides separate measures of a belief in control by powerful others, by chance, and by oneself. Data from 151 students were available for item analyses of the needs inventory.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The mean scores for all *Ss* for the need scales were as follows: physiological 8.0 ($SD = 7.3$), safety 5.8 ($SD = 8.5$), belongingness 9.7 ($SD = 9.3$), esteem 13.3 ($SD = 8.8$), and self-actualization 9.5 ($SD = 9.0$).

Students with the higher satisfaction scores obtained the lower neuroticism scores (see Table 1), though this association was significant only for physiological ($r = -.47, p < .001$), safety ($r = -.48, p < .001$), and esteem ($r = -.52, p < .001$) needs. In addition, extraverted students expressed higher need satisfaction scores for the belongingness ($r = .29, p < .01$) and esteem needs ($r = .41, p < .001$) than did introverted students. (Controlling for age and sex by means of partial correlation coefficients did not change the pattern of correlations.)

The correlations between the scores for the satisfaction of needs and beliefs in locus of control also supported the hypotheses (see Table 1). Students reporting a strong belief in internal control had substantial satisfaction of physiological, safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization needs. Students reporting a strong belief in chance control had little satisfaction of these needs. Students with a strong belief in control by others had little satisfaction of their physiological, safety, and esteem needs.

The scores from the needs of satisfaction inventory confirmed the hypotheses made by Maslow. The higher the level of satisfaction of the needs, the more psychologically healthy the person was (on a measure of neuroticism and on a measure of belief in an internal locus of control).

¹ The full inventory can be obtained from the first author at the address shown at the end of this article.

TABLE 1
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN SCORES FOR THE SATISFACTION OF THE BASIC NEEDS AND
PERSONALITY INVENTORY SCORES

Variables	Needs				Self-actualization
	Physiological	Safety	Belonging	Esteem	
	<i>Eysenck (n = 66)</i>				
Extraversion	.10	.10	.29**	.41***	.04
Neuroticism	-.47***	-.48***	-.08	-.52***	-.15
	<i>Locus Of Control (n = 88)</i>				
Powerful others	-.37***	-.22*	-.13	-.30**	-.08
Internal	.41***	.35***	.39***	.35***	.42***
Chance	-.34***	-.30**	-.30**	-.24*	-.25**
	<i>Needs (n = 151)</i>				
Physiological	—	.58***	.35***	.39***	.34***
Safety		—	.33***	.47***	.44***
Belonging			—	.34***	.41***
Esteem				—	.39***
Self-actualization					—

* one-tailed $p < 0.05$.

** one-tailed $p < 0.01$.

*** one-tailed $p < 0.001$.

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