

Examining the Relative Contribution of Maslow's Motivational Dimensions to Employee Performance

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Abstract: The motivation of employees is a known factor of organizational performance. However, there is still a lack of empirical evidence on the relative contribution of different motivational dimensions to employee performance in public sector organizations. This study examines the role of five dimensions of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, i.e. physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs to employee performance in the Department of Education and Culture of Indramayu Regency, Indonesia. The study used a quantitative research design where data was collected through survey, structured questionnaires from 54 employees. The validity and reliability of the research instrument was established before data analysis. Multiple linear regression was used to determine the contribution of each motivational dimension to employee performance. The results indicated that the five dimensions of motivation together contribute to employee performance, with esteem needs having the highest contribution among the motivation dimensions. The findings pointed out the importance of applying comprehensive motivational approaches that address the employees' physiological, safety, social, esteem and self-actualisation need to improve employee performance. This study is a contribution to the application of Maslow's motivational theory in the public sector and has practical implications for human resource management in government institutions.

Keywords: Employee Performance, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Motivation, Multiple Linear Regression.

Introduction

Employee performance is a fundamental determinant of organizational effectiveness especially in public sector institutions where the quality of public service depends greatly on the competence, commitment and productivity of employees. Consequently, improving employee performance has become a strategic priority of public organizations that aim at achieving organizational goals and meeting the increasing public expectations for effective and accountable service delivery. Thus, the identification of organizational factors that contribute to higher employee performance remains important for human resource management and public administration research ([Adnan et al., 2022](#); [Ştefan et al., 2020](#)). Work motivation is always considered as one of the most influential factors among the various factors of employee performance. Highly motivated employees are more committed, more involved in their jobs and more productive than less motivated employees. Motivated employees tend to put forth more effort, adapt to changes in the organization, and work toward achieving institutional goals. Therefore, work motivation continues to be one of the most important areas of interest for both researchers and practitioners as a strategic mechanism for improving organizational performance ([Gunawan et al., 2022](#); [issa Mansaray, 2019](#)). One of the most widely adopted theoretical frameworks for understanding employee motivation is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. The theory suggests that human motivation is developed through five hierarchical dimensions namely physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs. Together, these dimensions account for human motivation, but they might not be equally important for employee performance. Work motivation is not a single construct. It is, therefore, important to examine the contribution of each motivational dimension individually as the extent to which each motivational dimension impacts the work behavior of employees is likely to be affected by different organizational contexts ([Pincus, 2023](#); [Talevich et al., 2017](#)). Empirical evidence has been found to show that work motivation has a positive effect on employee performance in different organizational settings. However, most of the previous work motivation literature has investigated the overall effect of work motivation without examining the relative contribution of each of its dimensions. Thus, there is no empirical evidence on which dimensions of Maslow's motivational framework are most effective in improving employee performance, especially in the context of Indonesian organizations. This limitation restricts the capacity of managers to focus on the motivational strategies that are most pertinent to the requirements of the employees ([Kenrick et al., 2010](#); [Zimmerman & Schunk, 2012](#)). This gap should be filled, as the different motivational dimensions may need different managerial approaches. For example, organizations can heavily invest in financial incentives while employees are more motivated by recognition, professional development or opportunities for self-actualization. Therefore, understanding

the contribution of each motivational dimension can help organizational leaders to develop more targeted and effective human resource management policies and ultimately enhance employees' performance and organizational effectiveness. Taking these considerations into account, this study aims to investigate the contribution of Maslow's motivational dimensions to employee performance ([Bedan et al., 2021](#); [Garanina et al., 2017](#)). Specifically, this study focused on the relationship between employee performance and physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs. The results are expected to contribute to the literature on organizational behavior by providing a dimension-based understanding of work motivation and offering practical implications for organizations to develop evidence-based motivational strategies ([Taormina & Gao, 2013](#)).

Research Method

This section introduces the methodological procedures followed to achieve the research objectives. It contains a description of research design, study setting, participants, research variables, data collection procedures and the statistical techniques used to determine the contribution of Maslow's motivational dimensions to employee performance. The methodological procedures were planned to guarantee the validity and reliability of the research results and to offer a systematic way of analyzing the data.

Research Design

The study adopted a quantitative explanatory research design to investigate the contribution of Maslow's motivational dimensions to employee performance. This study was conducted by using structured survey approach in which data were collected through questionnaire administered to employees of Department of Education and Culture of Indramayu Regency. The study utilized five dimensions of work motivation, including physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization need as independent variables, and employee performance as the dependent variable ([Desmet & Fokkinga, 2020](#); [Stefan et al., 2020](#)). To examine the simultaneous and partial effects of motivational dimensions on employee performance, descriptive statistics, validity and reliability testing and multiple linear regression analysis were conducted. The general research procedure is shown in Figure 1.

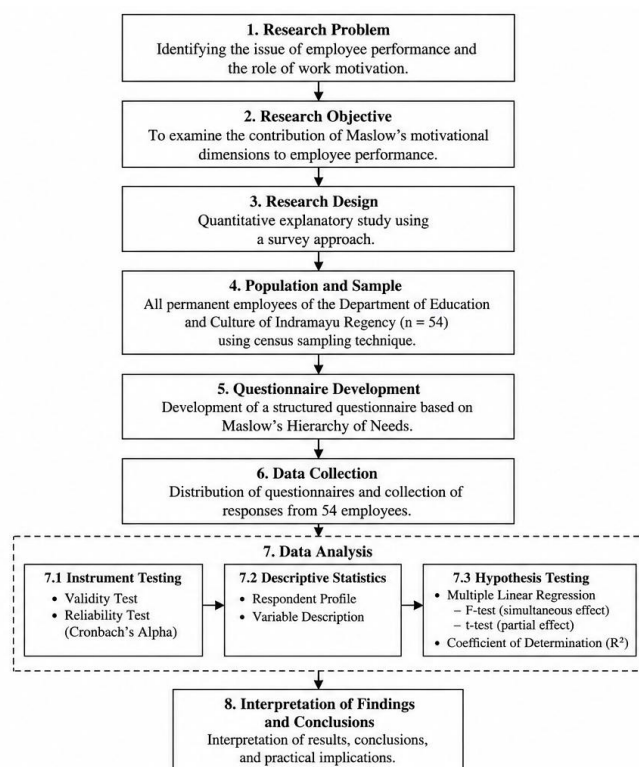


Figure 1 Research Design of the Study

The study followed a systematic research methodology consisting of several sequential phases (shown in Figure 1). The research process started with the identification of the research problem and the research objective. The choice of a quantitative explanatory research design was then made. The authors then developed a structured questionnaire based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory and distributed it to all the employees by using a census sampling technique. The data obtained were then subjected to tests of validity and reliability and were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression. Lastly, the research findings were interpreted to conclude and give practical implications on the contribution of Maslow's motivational dimensions to employee performance ([Ekundayo, 2018](#)).

Research Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at the Department of Education and Culture of Indramayu Regency, West Java Indonesia. The institution oversees the management and implementation of educational and cultural policies at the regional level. As a public sector organization, its effectiveness is largely dependent on the performance of its employees in providing administrative and public services. Thus, the institution provides an appropriate setting to examine the contribution of motivational dimensions to employee performance ([Pulasinghage., 2010](#)). The study involved all permanent employees of the Department of Education and Culture of Indramayu Regency as research subjects. The total population is

only 54 employees, so census sampling technique was used, where all members of the population were included in the study. This approach ensured that the organization was well represented and sampling bias associated with probability sampling techniques was avoided. Figure 2 presents the geographical position of the Department of Education and Culture of Indramayu Regency as a description of the research location.

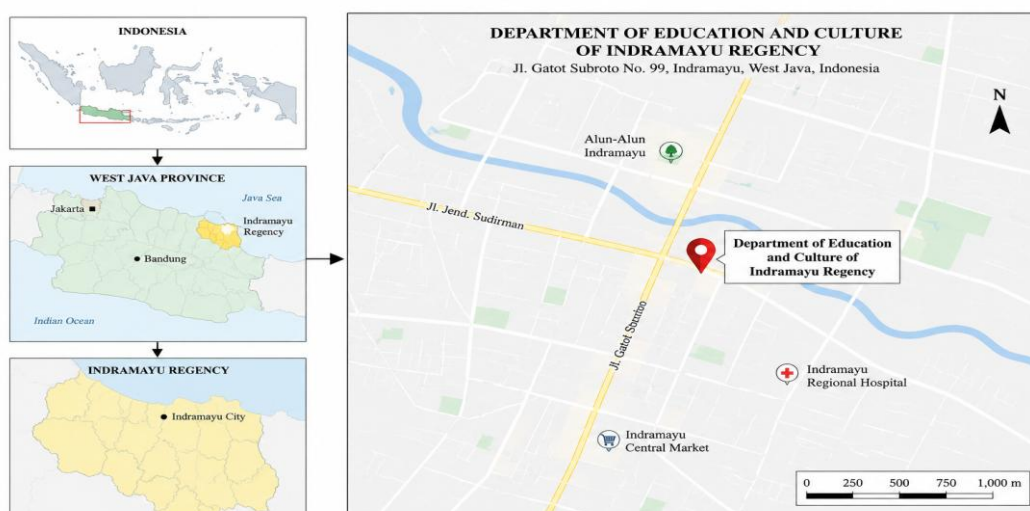


Figure 2 Geographic Location of the Research Site

The study was conducted in the Department of Education and Culture of Indramayu Regency, West Java, Indonesia as shown in Figure 2. The institution has been selected due to its strategic role in providing educational and administrative public services at the regional level. The performance of its employees is critical to the effective delivery of services and the achievement of institutional objectives as a government agency. Thereby, the organization provides a good environment to study the contribution of the motivational dimensions of Maslow to the performance of employees.

Research Variables and Measurement

The current study investigated the relationship between Maslow's motivation dimensions and employee performance. The five dimensions of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs were the independent variables. The five dimensions were physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs. The dependent variable was employees' performance. The operational and measurement indicators for each variable were taken from the motivational theory of Maslow and the framework of employee performance in the organization (Forson et al., 2021; Maduka & Okafor, 2014). The data were collected using a structured questionnaire of 24 measurement items, which include 20 measurement items measuring five dimensions of motivation and 4 measurement items measuring employee performance. All questionnaire items were scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1

(strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The higher the score, the higher the level of perceived work motivation and employee performance. The operational definitions of the variables of the study are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 Research Variables and Measurement

Variable	Dimension	Number of Items	Scale
Work Motivation	Physiological Needs	4	5-point Likert
	Safety Needs	4	5-point Likert
	Social Needs	4	5-point Likert
	Esteem Needs	4	5-point Likert
	Self-Actualization Needs	4	5-point Likert
Employee Performance	Employee Performance	4	5-point Likert

From Table 1, work motivation is operationalized by five dimensions from Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, and employee performance is measured by four questionnaire items. The common five-point Likert scale helped to maintain the same measurement of the respondents' perceptions and facilitated the statistical analysis of the relationships between the research variables.

Data Collection Procedure

The Data for this study were collected by using a structured questionnaire distributed to all employees of the Department of Education and Culture of Indramayu Regency. The questionnaire was administered after obtaining permission for the conduct of the study from the relevant institution. The questionnaire was developed to measure the five dimensions of work motivation based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory and employee performance using standardized measurement indicators. The questionnaires were given to the respondents directly by using census approach so that all employees had equal chance to participate in the study. The respondents were informed about the purpose of the research, and they were assured that their responses will be kept confidential and will be used for academic purposes only. The completed questionnaires were checked for completeness and consistency prior to processing for statistical analysis. Figure 3 shows the overall data collection procedure used in this study.

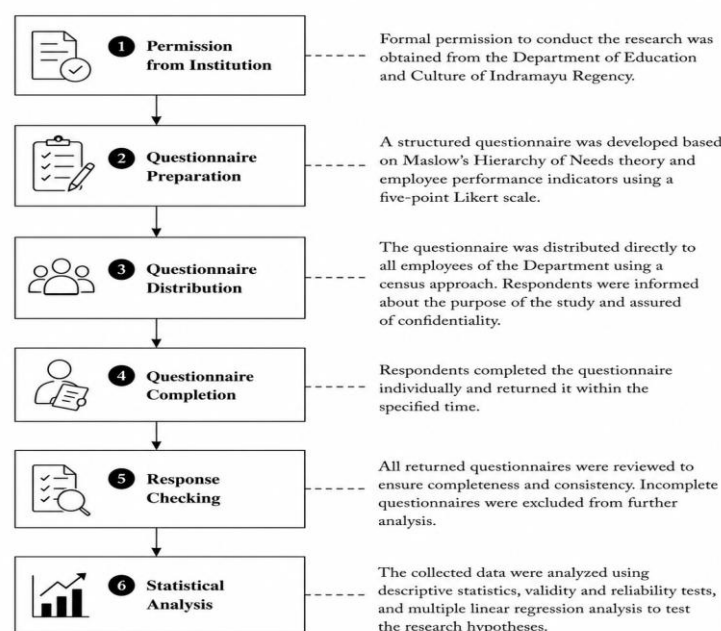


Figure 3 Data Collection Procedure

The process of data collection consisted of six consecutive steps, from institutional permission to statistical analysis, as shown in Figure 3. The questionnaires were issued to all employees after the research instrument was prepared using the census sampling technique. The filled questionnaires were checked for completeness and consistency of responses prior to the descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. This systematic procedure ensured that the data collected were appropriate to examine the contribution of Maslow's motivational dimensions to employee performance.

Data Analysis

Data collected was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The analysis started by applying descriptive statistics to summarize the characteristics of the respondents and describe the distribution of each of the research variables. To ensure the quality of the measurement instrument, validity and reliability tests were conducted before testing the hypothesis. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to study the contribution of Maslow's motivational dimensions to employee performance. The F-test was used to test the simultaneous effect of the independent variables, the t-test was used to test the partial contribution of each motivational dimension. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was also computed to determine percentage of total variance in employee performance explained by five motivational dimensions. Statistical significance was set at the 5% significance level ($p < 0.05$).

Table 2 Summary of Statistical Analysis

Analysis Technique	Purpose
Descriptive Statistics	To summarize respondents' characteristics and research variables
Validity Test	To evaluate the validity of questionnaire items
Reliability Test	To assess the internal consistency of the measurement instrument
Multiple Linear Regression	To examine the contribution of Maslow's motivational dimensions to employee performance
F-test	To assess the simultaneous effect of all independent variables
t-test	To evaluate the partial effect of each motivational dimension
Coefficient of Determination (R^2)	To determine the explanatory power of the regression model

Table 2 summarizes the statistical analyses carried out sequentially to guarantee the quality of the measurement instrument and to test the proposed relationships among the research variables. Descriptive statistics were used to provide an overview of the data and multiple linear regression analysis was used to determine the simultaneous and individual contribution of Maslow's motivational dimensions on employee performance.

Result and Discussion

This section presents the results of the empirical study based on data collected from employees of the Indramayu Regency Department of Education and Culture. The result is the respondents' characteristics, descriptive statistics, instrument test, and multiple linear regression to test the contribution of Maslow's dimensions of motivation to employee performance.

Descriptive Statistics of Maslow's Motivational Dimensions

This section provides descriptive statistics for the five motivational dimensions based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory. Descriptive analysis was done to provide an overview of the employees' perceptions on physiological, safety, social, esteem and self-actualization needs before analyzing their contribution to employee performance. Mean scores of each motivational dimension are shown in Figure 4.

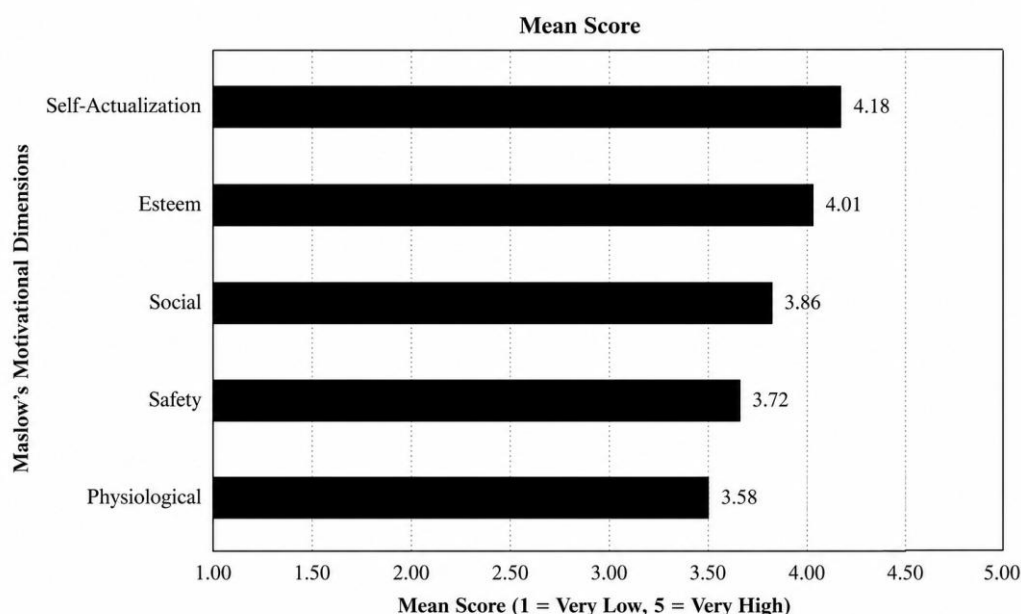


Figure 4 Mean Scores of Maslow's Motivational Dimensions

The five motivational dimensions had different mean scores (see Figure 4), suggesting that employees perceived the hierarchy of needs differently. This comparison shows that some motivational dimensions were rated somewhat higher than others, suggesting that there were differences in the extent to which each need was satisfied in the company. In general, the descriptive findings show that the motivational needs of the employees were perceived positively. This provides a preliminary indication that work motivation could be related to employee performance. The descriptive results also provide a basis for future inferential analyses with multiple linear regression.

Instrument Evaluation

Before testing the hypothesis, the research instrument was checked for quality to ensure that the questionnaire items measured the constructs under study. Validity was tested using the Pearson Product Moment correlation by comparing the calculated correlation coefficient of each item with the critical value at the 5% level of significance. The summary of the instrument evaluation is shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Summary of Instrument Evaluation

Variable	Number of Items	Valid Items	Invalid Items	Decision
Physiological Needs	3	3	0	Valid
Safety Needs	3	3	0	Valid
Social Needs	4	4	0	Valid
Esteem Needs	6	6	0	Valid
Self-Actualization Needs	4	4	0	Valid

Employee Performance	4	4	0	Valid
Total	24	24	0	Valid

Table 3 The findings demonstrate that all questions in the questionnaire met the validity criteria, indicating each indicator was suitable to represent the construct. No invalid items were detected; thus, all questionnaire items were kept for the subsequent statistical analysis. These findings confirmed that the research instrument was valid to study the contribution of Maslow's motivational dimensions to employee performance.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was used to examine the contribution of five dimensions of motivation, namely physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs, to employee performance. The analysis considered the overall model fit, the significance of the regression model and the individual contribution of each motivational dimension. Results are shown in Tables 4-6.

Table 4 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square
1	0.945	0.894

The summary of model shows the explanatory power of the regression model. The multiple correlation coefficient (R) reflects the degree of the relationship between the five motivational dimensions and employee performance while the coefficient of determination (R^2) reflects the proportion of variance in employee performance explained by the regression model.

Table 5 ANOVA Results

Model	F	Sig.
Regression	80.880	0.000

The ANOVA results show the overall significance of the regression model. The F-test tests whether the five motivational dimensions as a group provide a significant statistical explanation of employee performance

Table 6 Regression Coefficients

Predictor	t	Sig.	Decision
Physiological Needs	1.778	0.0409	Significant
Safety Needs	2.355	0.0113	Significant
Social Needs	1.743	0.015*	Significant
Esteem Needs	7.010	0.000	Significant
Self-Actualization Needs	1.971	0.030	Significant

The regression coefficients showed that each of the motivational dimensions positively influenced employee performance. The significance of each predictor was tested using the t-test at a 5% significance level. The results indicate that the combined and individual motivational dimensions contributed to explaining variations in employee performance.

Discussion

The results show that motivation is an important factor that contributes to the performance of the employees. Regression analysis shows that the five dimensions of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs are predictors of employee performance in general. This seems to imply that motivation is a multi-dimensional construct and that the satisfaction of different levels of needs results in better work outcomes. The results are supportive of the idea that the performance of employees depends on the extent to which organizations can satisfy the motivational needs of employees. The descriptive analysis further indicated that the respondents viewed the implementation of motivational practices positively on all the dimensions. The employees reported a positive perception on physiological, safety, social, esteem and self-actualization needs. The results show that the organization has succeeded in creating a working environment that meets the employees' basic and psychological needs and motivates them for good performance of their duties. The results are consistent with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory which states that motivation increases as needs are met in a progressive manner from physiological to safety, social belonging, esteem and self-actualization. This fulfillment of needs in an organization enables the employees to focus on the fulfillment of the organization's goals with more dedication to work and performance. In the explanation of the employee performance, the highest dimension of importance was the esteem needs between the five motivational dimensions. The finding underlines the importance of recognition, appreciation and acknowledgement from supervisors and the organization in motivating employees to higher levels of performance. Employees who feel their contribution is valued are more loyal, accountable and efficient at work. Likewise, other dimensions of motivation have a positive impact on the performance of employees. When employees' physiological and safety needs are met, they feel stable and secure, which helps them concentrate on their work duties. Also, social needs stimulate teamwork, communication and sense of belonging in the organization, while self-actualization needs foster continuous learning, creativity and professional development. The results demonstrate that the employee's performance is more beneficial when various motivational dimensions are satisfied simultaneously rather than focusing on one motivational dimension. The findings suggest that a holistic approach to motivation is needed to address the diverse needs of employees. Organizations have to offer competitive pay and job security but at the same time promote healthy interpersonal relations, recognize achievements and provide opportunities for personal and professional development.

Organisations that address all these motivational drivers concurrently are better positioned to motivate their workforce towards higher performance levels and long-term organisational success.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study is to analyze the effect of the five dimensions of Maslow's hierarchy of needs on the performance of employees of the Department of Education and Culture of Indramayu Regency. The results show that the motivational dimensions together contribute to employee performance, confirming that employee motivation is an important determinant of work outcomes. Also, descriptive analysis showed that motivational practices were generally seen to be effectively implemented by employees across all dimensions. The motivational dimensions indicated that esteem needs had the most contribution to employee performance, emphasizing the importance of recognition and appreciation in improving employees' commitment and productivity. The other dimensions (physiological needs, safety needs, social needs and self-actualization needs) also contributed positively, demonstrating that employee performance is affected by a satisfaction of different motivational needs rather than a single factor. The findings show that organizations need to have comprehensive motivational strategies that cater for the different needs of the employees. Future research should examine other factors that affect employee performance and extend the research to other organizational contexts and larger samples to improve the generalizability of the findings.

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