

## Hierarchy of Needs in Charlie's Character in *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*

**Ahmad Nizam Azmi**

English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang

[17320050@student.uin-malang.ac.id](mailto:17320050@student.uin-malang.ac.id)DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18860/lilics.v3i1.6802>

Copyright © Ahmad Nizam Azmi

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/).**How to Cite: APA Style 7<sup>th</sup> edition**

---

**Submission****Track:**

Received:

10-01-2024

Available online:

30-04-2024

Corresponding

Author:

Ahmad Nizam Azmi

[17320050@student.uin-malang.ac.id](mailto:17320050@student.uin-malang.ac.id)**ABSTRACT**

*As social beings, humans have a variety of needs that form the basis of their existence. Abraham Maslow (1943) categorized five hierarchies of needs consisting of physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, self-esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. In this study, researcher used the hierarchy of needs theory to analyze the main character in the novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky which aims to find out how Charlie fulfills his hierarchy of needs. This research used a literary psychology approach by paying attention to the psychological aspects of the main character in the novel. The researcher collected data in the form of sentences, paragraphs, and dialog related to the hierarchy of needs. The results of this study showed that the way Charlie fulfilled the hierarchy of needs in Stephen Chbosky's *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* was through five elements. Physiological needs, the main character Charlie tried to fulfill his physiological needs in the form of eating and sleeping. Safety needs, Charlie could fulfill the need for safety by forming a close friendship with Bill. Bill provided emotional support and psychological safety for him. Love needs, this need for love could be fulfilled by Charlie by forming close bonds with his new friends, such as Sam and Patrick. They gave emotional support and made him feel accepted. Esteem needs, Charlie managed to fulfill his self-esteem needs in two ways: self-esteem needs from himself and self-esteem needs from others. Charlie managed to meet his self-actualization needs through his passion for reading, writing, and literature.*

**Keywords:** *Hierarchy of Needs, Love and Belonging Needs, Psychological Need, Psychology of Literature, Safety Needs*

---

**INTRODUCTION**

Literary works are the creative results of authors who are inspired by the reality of life, which is identical to the complexity of the author's life. Literary works serve to cultivate imagination, a creative and constructive power that permeates every aspect of daily life

(Rahayu, 2009). Literary works are often associated with the psychological symptoms of human attitudes and behaviors as they relate to the realities of life in society. The author's decision to create literary works is based on the experience he has gained from the reality of life in society that occurs in the role of characters in the real world and is poured into the field of literature. The first aspect that gets attention is that language is the main medium of literary works, while the literary work itself already contains various problems (Ratna, 2007).

One of the literary works is a novel. Novels can provide more possibilities for readers to capture the psychological development of the characters in the story. As a work of literature, novels play a role in society because many of them address life issues. This is closely related to the fulfillment of a number of needs in order to continue living. In achieving a fulfilling life, behavior plays an important role as a reflection of one's personality. Psychological studies highlight needs as the main focus, as described in Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. According to Maslow, human behavior is determined by the individual's tendency to achieve goals so that the individual's life is happier and at the same time satisfying (Minderop, 2010).

Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, more commonly called Maslow's Theory, stimulates a huge influence on human life in meeting their daily needs. Maslow defines all actions chosen in human life based on motivation to achieve certain needs. According to Maslow (1943), human behavior is strongly influenced by motivation. Maslow developed a theory of motivation to direct human behavior towards achieving goals. Maslow used a pyramid as a prop to visualize his idea of the hierarchy of needs theory.

As social beings, humans have a variety of needs that are fundamental to their existence. According to Maslow (1943), in his hierarchy of needs theory, which states that there are different levels of needs that must be met for a person to feel satisfied, ranging from physiological needs such as food, shelter, and safety to psychological needs such as affection, self-esteem, and self-actualization.

In this research, the researcher chose the novel "The Perks of Being a Wallflower" to study using the hierarchy of needs theory because the story describes the journey of the main character, Charlie, in achieving happiness and fulfilling his needs throughout the story. Therefore, the novel can be examined using Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. In his theory, Maslow (1943) explains that individuals have a hierarchy of needs that must be met in order, starting from basic needs to higher ones.

*The Perks of Being a Wallflower* is a novel written by American author and filmmaker Stephen Chbosky, which was first published in 1999. The novel achieved the status of a New York Times bestseller. Moreover, it was featured on the American Library Association's annual list of "10 most challenging books." The novel was adapted into a film with the same title in 2012. Stephen Chbosky is a Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, native who completed the filmic writing program at the University of Southern California (Keeve, 2012).

*The Perks of Being a Wallflower* tells about a teenage boy named Charlie, who recounts his experiences through letters he writes to a friend without identifying himself or his name. The story chronicles Charlie's journey in exploring the world of adolescence, friendship, love, and his personal struggles, and depicts his struggle in adapting to high school life while founding for his true self. The novel addresses a variety of themes, including growth, friendship, love, family, violence, and mental illness. The novel also discusses how a teenager's relationships with friends and family can affect one's personal development. While the main focus of the story

is Charlie's journey and emotional development during his first year of high school, it also includes many elements that address the needs and development of the main character.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher took several previous studies as reference material. First, written by Bahuwa (2018) entitled *an analysis of Maslow's hierarchy of need in the great Gatsby novel by Franciss Scott Fitzgerald's*. The research utilized a descriptive qualitative method to identify five types of Abraham Maslow's needs. The results indicated that Jay Gatsby did not fulfill two of these needs: safety and love/belongingness. Second, written by Soraya (2018) entitled *The Hierarchy of Needs in Weiner's Little Earthquakes*. The research employed a descriptive qualitative method, and the analysis results suggest that all characters possess significant power to satisfy the Hierarchy of Needs. Third, written by Ronie and Hellystia (2019) entitled *Hierarchy of needs analysis of the main character of a novel entitled flawed by cecelia ahern*. The researcher analyzed the hierarchy of needs using qualitative and descriptive methods. Based on Maslow's theory, there are five levels of hierarchy of needs that the main character can satisfy.

Further, the next some previous studies that used the same theory as this research. Such as, *The Hierarchy of Needs Portrayed in Jim Prestons Character in Passengers (2016) Film* by Citra, Natsir, and Astuti (2020). The research used a descriptive qualitative method by Elo and Kyngas and the result of their research shows that Jim fulfilled five of his needs which were physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness and love needs, self-esteem, and self-actualization. Next, *Hierarchy of Needs in Angie Thomas's Novel "The Hate U Give": Abraham Maslow* by Lubis and Satria (2021). The research used descriptive qualitative by Creswell and the result of the research shows the influence of hierarchy of needs experienced by the characters such as; Physiological, Safety, Love/Belonging, Esteem, Self-actualization. More, *The Hierarchy of needs reflected on the male main character in Brenda Chapman's come away (2020)* by Tsani (2022). The research used a qualitative method and the result of the research was that Peter manages to fulfill five levels of his hierarchy of needs that drove him to achieve his dream of becoming a pirate captain in Neverland.

Besides, there were several previous studies with the same research object. First, written by Tenriuji, Maca, and Abeng (2021) entitled *The Element of Politeness in Novel The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. The research used a qualitative descriptive research method through a sociopragmatic approach and the result was that the characters used politeness by following a measurement of the pragmatic scale to express their politeness. These pragmatic scales are the cost-benefit scale, the optional scale, the indirectness scale, and the social distance scale. Second, written by Mahendra (2022) entitled *Adolescence Crisis of Charlie In Chbosky's The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. The research is literary criticism and the research findings showed that Charlie manages his adolescent difficulties well. Charlie was able to manage his adolescent crises and grow in his ego strength of faithfulness by reevaluating his childhood crises.

Here was also some previous research on the same object. Such as, *Coping with Traumatic Experience in Stephen Chbosky's The Perks of Being a Wallflower Novel (1999): Individual Psychology* by Nurmalasari (2022). The research was qualitative and the results show that there were three symptoms of Charlie's trauma experience, which include re-experiencing, avoidance, and hyperarousal. There were two factors that described Charlie's coping strategies in dealing with traumatic experiences, which include internal factors and external factors. Last, *Traumatic Experience in the Novel "The Perks of Being a Wallflower" By Stephen Chbosky's (1999): Individual Psychology* by Khotimah, Aini, and Rohmana (2023). The research used the

descriptive-qualitative method and the results of the research showed that Charlie had had trauma experiences in the past that required him to find people to tell stories about the problems he was facing.

This study examined the hierarchy of needs of the main character in the novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* and highlights distinctions from other similar research. Prior studies had not delved into the hierarchy of needs in this particular novel. Thus, this study was appropriate because the researcher analyzed Stephen Chbosky's novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* through the lens of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, paying particular attention to Charlie's psychological aspects as the main character.

Based on the explanation above, this research was projected to answer the following problem: *How does Charlie as the main character fulfill his needs in The Perks of Being a Wallflower by Stephen Chbosky?*. The aim of this research was to find out how Charlie as the main character fulfilled his hierarchy of needs.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research fell under the category of literary criticism as it analyzed works of literature. The researcher used Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (1943) to analyze the novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* written by Stephen Chbosky. In his theory, Maslow suggested five hierarchies of needs, namely physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs.

The novel used in this study was *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, written by American writer Stephen Chbosky. It had 213 pages and was divided into four parts. Published in 2012 by MTV Books in London, the present data in this research consisted of sentences, paragraphs, and dialogue between characters in the novel. All data were derived from Stephen Chbosky's *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, which depicted Charlie, the main character, encountering all the levels of the hierarchy of needs.

In this research, data was collected at various stages. Initially, the researcher read the novel. Next, essential parts relating to the topic of the hierarchy of needs were highlighted and underlined. Lastly, the researcher took several notes and categorized them to obtain data on how the main character fulfilled his needs.

To analyze the data collected, the researcher used several steps in this research, which were: First, identifying the data collected regarding Charlie's hierarchy of needs and his fulfillment of them in the novel. Second, classifying the data collected regarding Charlie's hierarchy of needs and how he satisfied them in the novel. Lastly, describing, interpreting, explaining, and concluding the collected data on Charlie's hierarchy of needs and how he fulfilled them in the novel.

## FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

### *The Ways Charlie Fulfill His Needs*

This part explained the ways Charlie fulfilled his hierarchy of needs. Physiological Needs, Charlie fulfilled his physiological needs through aspects such as eating, drinking, and sleeping. Safety Needs, in the novel, Charlie had a complicated family background and had experienced traumatic events. The need for safety and stability emerged as one of the main motivations in his life and involved relationships with his teacher, Bill. Love and Belonging, during the story, Charlie strived to build social relationships. He found new friends at his school, including

Patrick and Sam. These relationships provided much-needed social support. Esteem needs, Charlie sought recognition and acceptance from his friends and family. The search for identity and feeling valued became an important journey for this character. Acceptance from his new friends gave him the confidence he needed. Self-actualization needs, as the story progressed, Charlie went through a process of self-actualization. Through experience and reflection, he began to understand himself, realize his potential, and find his purpose in life. This process included a deeper understanding of literature and his involvement in creative activities.

### *Physiological Needs*

According to Maslow (1943), physiological needs were the most fundamental and had to be satisfied before any other needs could be addressed. Physiological needs were basic needs which included food, water, shelter, and other basic necessities. An individual was unlikely to be able to meet the next level of needs if they had not met these basic needs. When one part of the physiological needs could not be met, it would automatically interfere with the fulfillment of needs at the next level.

Charlie, as the main character in the novel *\*The Perks of Being a Wallflower\**, had physiological needs, and the way he fulfilled these needs would be illustrated in the following quotation from the novel.:

#### Datum 1

*This made them laugh because they knew I meant it honest, not show-off. Then they told me their favorites, and we sat quiet. I ate the pumpkin pie because the lady said it was in season, and Patrick and Sam smoked more cigarettes. (Chbosky, 2012, P.20)*

In the paragraph quotation above, when Patrick and Sam told Charlie about their favorite thing and after all were sat quiet. Charlie as the main character is doing activities that reflect his physiological needs. That is, when he said "*I ate the pumpkin pie,*" it reflected the physiological need for food. He ate the pumpkin pie because Sam said it was the season. Based on the explanation, Charlie fulfilled his physiological needs by eating pumpkin pie. The need for food was part of the basic physiological needs in Maslow's hierarchy.

#### Datum 2

*However, I felt embarrassed, because that night, I had a strange dream. I was with Sam. And we were both naked. And his legs were spread over the side of the couch. And I woke up. And I had never felt that good in my life. But I also felt bad that I saw him naked without his permission. I think I should tell Sam about this, and I really hope this doesn't prevent us from making our own inside jokes. It would be great to have a friend again. I like that better than dating. (Chbosky, 2012, P.21)*

In the paragraph quotation above, it told about Charlie at night when he had a strange dream about Sam. If Charlie had a dream that night, it indicated that he was sleeping. It showed the physiological needs of sleep. When people maintained a regular sleep routine, their body functions ran well, so they could easily avoid some diseases, so that a person would find it difficult to fulfill other needs. Therefore, the physiological needs of sleep were also important. Based on the explanation above, Charlie had fulfilled his physiological needs by sleeping.

## Datum 3

*I cannot imagine that I will ever come home for a homecoming game after I leave here, but it was fun to pretend that I was. I found Patrick and Sam sitting in their normal spot in the bleachers, and I started acting like I hadn't seen them in a year even though I had seen them that afternoon in lunch when I ate my orange, and they smoked cigarettes. (Chbosky, 2012, P.29)*

In the paragraph quotation above, in the context of Maslow's physiological needs, Charlie had fulfilled his basic need to eat, which was represented by the activity of his lunch with an orange and his physical needs, such as smoking with his friends. While these needs might have been perceived as simple in nature, it was important to highlight that physiological needs had to be met before individuals could move on to higher levels of needs in Maslow's hierarchy, such as safety, affection, esteem, and self-actualization.

## Datum 4

*I was actually quite hungry because normally Sam and Patrick take me to the Big Boy after the football games, and I guess I was used to it by now. I ate the brownie, and it tasted a little weird, but it was still a brownie, so I still liked it. But this was not an ordinary brownie. Since you are older, I think you know what kind of brownie it was. (Chbosky, 2012, P.34-35).*

In the paragraph quotation above, the physiological needs of the main character, Charlie, were reflected through his food experiences. Charlie felt hungry because Sam and Patrick usually took him to Big Boy after soccer games, and this had become a habit for him. When given a piece of brownie, even though it tasted a little strange, Charlie still liked it because of the habit. However, the brownie turned out to be unusual. In the context of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, this incident could be attributed to the physiological level of needs, where Charlie tried to fulfill his body's basic needs, namely food, and showed his adaptation to new situations despite the discomfort in the eating experience.

## Datum 5

*I have to say that it was the best milkshake I ever had in my life. It was so delicious, it almost scared me. (Chbosky, 2012, P.37)*

In the sentences above, it could be related to physiological needs by detailing how the experience of drinking this milkshake provided satisfaction to the physiological needs of the main character, Charlie. In the context of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, physiological needs were basic needs such as food and drink. In this quote, when Charlie described the milkshake as the best in his life, such as in the sentence "the best milkshake I ever had in my life," it could be interpreted that the experience satisfied his physiological needs. The delicious, visceral taste almost scared him, as described, "so delicious, it almost scared me," suggesting that the enjoyment might have exceeded his expectations, providing a deep sense of satisfaction on a physiological level.

## Datum 6

*The last time I had a friend over to dinner was Michael last year. We had tacos. The really great part was that Michael stayed over to sleep. We ended up sleeping very little. (Chbosky, 2012, P.55)*

In the sentences above, it could be seen that the activities were related to physiological needs, especially food and sleep needs. First, there were basic physiological needs such as food that were met by serving food, in this case, tacos. This could be connected to the need for food and nutritional intake, which was part of the basic level in Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Furthermore, the paragraph implied that Michael stayed to sleep, and finally, Charlie and Michael slept very little. The need for sleep also fell under physiological needs, and the fact that they slept little might have indicated that these physiological needs had been neglected or compromised in the context of the social gathering. This indicated that social or emotional factors might have dominated physiological needs at that time.

### **Safety Needs**

Once physiological needs were met, individuals moved up to the next level of the hierarchy, which was safety needs. Safety needs referred to the need for safety, stability, and protection from physical and emotional harm (Maslow, 1943).

In the novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, Charlie met his safety needs through his relationship with his English teacher, Bill. Bill provided Charlie with a safe and stable environment where he could learn and grow, free from the chaotic and sometimes dangerous world outside of school. It could be seen in the following passage from the novel:

Datum 7

*Bill smiled and continued asking me questions. Slowly, he got to "problems at home." And I told him about the boy who makes mix tapes hitting my sister because my sister only told me not to tell mom or dad about it, so I figured I could tell Bill. He got this very serious look on his face after I told him, and he said something to me I don't think I will forget this semester or ever.*

*"Charlie, we accept the love we think we deserve."*

*I just stood there, quiet. Bill patted my shoulder and gave me a new book to read. He told me everything was going to be okay. (Chbosky, 2012, P.24)*

In the paragraph and dialogue quotation above, the need for safety in Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs is reflected through the experience of Charlie, the main character in the story. While talking to Bill, a teacher at his high school, Charlie reveals problems at home related to the violence experienced by his sister. In the context of safety, Charlie seeks a safe place to talk about this difficult situation. Charlie's silent reaction shows his understanding of the urgency and complexity of his situation. Later, Bill provided support and comfort by physically embracing him and giving him a new book to read, signifying that there was a safe place and support for him. Bill's presence provided emotional support and safety for Charlie. This action could be interpreted as an attempt to fulfill Charlie's safety needs.

### *Love and Belonging Needs*

The third level of the hierarchy was love and belonging needs. This need was about the social aspects that existed in society, such as the need to feel love, affection, and have ownership rights to something. In this need, Abraham Maslow argued about the reason why an individual sought love. Maslow (1943) explained the background of this aspect because it was based on loneliness, solitude, depression, stress, and excessive anxiety. This need included the need for social connection and relationships. This included friendships, family relationships, and

romantic relationships (Maslow, 1943). Like the previous needs, these third-level needs could be achieved if an individual successfully fulfilled their needs at the previous level.

Charlie, as the main character in the novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, had love and belonging needs, and the way he fulfilled these needs was illustrated in the following quotation from the novel:

Datum 8

*I told Sam that I dreamt that she and I were naked on the sofa, and I started crying because I felt bad, and do you know what she did? She laughed. Not a mean laugh, either. A really nice, warm laugh. She said that she thought I was being cute. And she said it was okay that I had a dream about her. And I stopped crying. Sam then asked me if I thought she was pretty, and I told her I thought she was "lovely." Sam then looked me right in the eye. (Chbosky, 2012, P.21-22)*

In the paragraph quotation above, it reflected the fulfillment of the third level of needs in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which is the need for affection and the need to feel recognized and accepted by others. The statement about sharing dreams and the positive reaction from Sam indicated a close relationship and emotional support between Charlie and Sam.

Sam's positive response to Charlie's confession about his intimate dream showed that Charlie felt accepted and recognized by Sam. This was part of the need for acceptance and recognition in the context of interpersonal relationships. Sam's question about whether she was considered beautiful by Charlie reflected the need to feel valued and to be considered romantically attractive. Charlie's positive assessment that Sam was "lovely" suggested that this relationship had a romantic element or at least a positive assessment of Sam's physical appearance. Sam's positive reactions and laughter helped to reduce Charlie's negative emotions, such as guilt or shame. This created a positive atmosphere in their relationship and contributed to his psychological well-being.

Datum 9

*Sam then gave me a hug, and it was strange because my family doesn't hug a lot except my Aunt Helen. But after a few moments, I could smell Sam's perfume, and I could feel her body against me. And I stepped back. (Chbosky, 2012, P.22)*

In the paragraph quotation above, there was an action that showed an expression of affection, which was the hug given by the character Sam. This hug created a moment of intimacy between Charlie and Sam. Although Charlie's family did not often give hugs, the presence of a hug from Sam provided a unique experience and illustrated that he may have felt emotionally connected to Sam.

The presence of Sam's perfume and the physical contact during the hug created a feeling of togetherness and attachment between Charlie and Sam. While Charlie initially felt strange about the hug, the act may have fulfilled his need to belong and connect with another person. The need for affection and belonging is part of the third level in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, namely social needs or love and belonging needs. Sam's hug and Charlie's emotional response reflected an attempt to fulfill this need, which occurred after basic physical needs and safety had been met. However, Charlie's initially strange reaction and stepping back after a while may have indicated an internal conflict. Perhaps the narrator was uncomfortable or unaccustomed to expressions of physical affection.

Datum 10

*In terms of my participation in things, I am trying to go to social events that they set up in my school. It's too late to join any clubs or anything like that, but I still try to go to the things that I can. Things like the homecoming football game and dance, even if I don't have a date. (Chbosky, 2012, P.28-29)*

In the paragraph quotation above, Charlie demonstrated a focus on social needs and a desire to feel connected to others, which correspond to Maslow's concept of the hierarchy of needs. Charlie made an effort to participate in social activities such as soccer games and dances, even without a partner, even if he was late. These actions reflected the drive to engage in activities that allowed social interaction, created bonds, and made him feel included in the school community. At this level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Charlie's behavior reflected an attempt to meet his social needs, which was an important stage for achieving broader self-fulfillment.

### *Esteem Needs*

The fourth level is esteem needs, which include the need for self-esteem and respect from others. This can be achieved through achievements, recognition, and positive feedback (Maslow, 1943). Self-esteem can come from oneself as well as others. When needs at this level can be met, it will automatically lead to the need to feel respect, a sense of being trusted by others, and stabilize oneself. After an individual manages to fulfill it, the individual's self-confidence will automatically increase. A high level of confidence will certainly affect the social role of the individual. Conversely, if this need is not met, it will bring serious impacts such as depression, anxiety, stress, lack of self-confidence, inferiority, and feeling useless. Charlie, as the main character in the novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, has esteem needs, and the way he fulfills these needs will be illustrated in the following quotation:

Datum 11

*Bill gave me my first B in advanced English class for my paper on Peter Pan! To tell you the truth, I don't know what I did differently from the other papers. He told me that my sense of language is improving along with my sentence structure. I think it's great that I could be improving on these things without noticing. By the way, Bill gives me A's on my report cards and letters to my parents. The grades on these papers are just between us. (Chbosky, 2012, P.46)*

In the paragraph quotation above, Charlie, as the main character, experiences growth in his need for self-esteem in Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. For example, when Charlie gets his first B in his Advanced English class, he feels proud and happy with his achievement. Positive acceptance from teachers like Bill gave a boost to his self-esteem. Although initially unsure of what he was doing differently, Charlie found that his language skills and sentence structure improved.

In the context of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the satisfaction of self-esteem needs can be placed above self-actualization needs. Charlie felt a sense of accomplishment and recognition, which supported his development as an individual. This is reinforced by the fact that Charlie specifically mentions that the grades on his paper are confidential between him and Bill. This suggests that his academic achievement and evaluation had a positive impact on his self-esteem.

Datum 12

*I think it was the first time in my life I ever felt like I looked "good." Do you know what I mean? That nice feeling when you look in the mirror, and your hair's right for the first time in your life? I don't think we should base so much on weight, muscles, and a good hair day, but when it happens, it's nice. It really is. (Chbosky, 2012, P.67)*

In the paragraph quotation above, Charlie mentioned that this was probably the first time in his life that he felt he looked "good." This indicates an increase in self-esteem. Acceptance and praise from others boosted his sense of self-worth. The statement, *"I think it was the first time in my life I ever felt like I looked 'good,'"* highlights the importance of external validation in enhancing self-perception. This reflects his need for approval and validation from others. Charlie's need for understanding and validation was fulfilled through the therapy sessions he attended. Through his conversations with his therapist, he was able to reflect on his experiences and gain insight into his emotions and behaviors. This is demonstrated in the following quote from the novel:

Datum 13

*So, I guess we are who we are for a lot of reasons. And maybe we'll never know most of them. But even if we don't have the power to choose where we come from, we can still choose where we go from there. We can still do things. And we can try to feel okay about them. (Chbosky, 2012, P.211)*

In the paragraph quotation above, Charlie faced a challenging journey in searching for his identity. The excerpt from the novel reflected his struggle to understand himself in the context of self-esteem needs according to Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Charlie searched for meaning and purpose in his life, exploring his desire to feel valued and accepted by others. The statement illustrated Charlie's drive to fulfill self-esteem needs, which was the fourth level in Maslow's hierarchy. Although Charlie might not have had full control over his origins, he recognized that he had the power to choose the direction of his life and take actions that built his sense of self-worth.

In this context, Charlie strived to do things that made him feel worthy, develop social relationships, and seek acceptance from his environment. His journey reflected the process of fulfilling the need for self-esteem, which was an important step in achieving a sense of satisfaction in life.

### *Self-actualization Needs*

In the paragraph quotation above, Charlie's self-actualization was evident in his passion for literature and writing, which served as crucial tools for his personal growth. By engaging deeply with books and expressing himself through writing, Charlie not only gained insight into his emotions but also developed his identity. His journey reflected Maslow's idea that self-actualization involved embracing one's passions and using them as a means of fulfillment.

Furthermore, Charlie's ability to find solace in literature highlighted how self-actualization was not just about external achievements but also about internal understanding and self-acceptance. His relationship with Bill played a significant role in this process, as the teacher provided guidance and encouragement, fostering Charlie's intellectual and emotional growth.

By the end of the novel, Charlie demonstrated a greater sense of self-awareness and acceptance, marking his progression toward self-actualization. His experiences showed that self-actualization was not a final destination but an ongoing journey of learning, healing, and self-discovery.

Datum 14

*I don't have a lot of time because my advanced english teacher assigned us a book to read, and I like to read books twice. Incidentally, the book is To Kill a Mockingbird. If you haven't read it, I think you should because it is very interesting. The teacher has assigned us a few chapters at a time, but I do not like to read books like that. I am halfway through the first time. (Chbosky, 2012, P.8-9)*

In the paragraph quotation above, it could be seen that Charlie had a need for intellectual fulfillment, which was in accordance with Maslow's theory. He mentioned that his teacher assigned them the book *To Kill a Mockingbird* and that he liked to read the book twice. This showed his desire for deep understanding and intellectual development. Furthermore, it was evident that, although the reading assignment was divided into chapters, Charlie preferred to read the book in its entirety. This reflected his drive to reach his full potential, creating a more immersive and thorough reading experience. Thus, through his love of reading and his desire to understand books deeply, Charlie could be connected to the self-actualization stage in Maslow's theory. In his journey toward understanding himself and the world around him, Charlie tried to fulfill his intellectual needs as an important step in achieving his potential.

Datum 15

*I have finished To Kill a Mockingbird. It is now my favorite book of all time, but then again, I always think that until I read another book. My advanced english teacher asked me to call him "Bill" when we're not in class, and he gave me another book to read. He says that I have a great skill at reading and understanding language, and he wanted me to write an essay about To Kill a Mockingbird. (Chbosky, 2012, P.9-10)*

In the paragraph quotation above, Charlie expressed his experience after finishing reading his favorite book, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Through the perspective of Abraham Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of human needs, Charlie reflected on the steps toward self-actualization. Charlie always felt that the book was his favorite, but this could be connected to the human desire to feel recognized and appreciated, which was part of the need for self-actualization.

When his advanced English teacher, whom he allowed to call "Bill" outside of class, gave him another book to read, it brought up the need for personal growth. The teacher saw Charlie's reading and language comprehension skills as having tremendous potential, which corresponded to the concept of self-actualization in Maslow's theory. Bill's assignment to write an essay on *To Kill a Mockingbird* could also be interpreted as a way to encourage Charlie's intellectual and creative development in fulfilling his self-actualization needs.

Thus, through his reading journey and interaction with his teacher, Charlie was led on a journey of self-actualization described in Maslow's theory. This process included the development of his personal potential, appreciation from others, and the fulfillment of intellectual needs that pushed him toward a deeper understanding of himself.

Datum 16

*I should stick to the subject, though. That is what my teacher Bill tells me to do because I write kind of the way I talk. I think that is why he wants me to write that essay about To Kill a Mockingbird. (Chbosky, 2012, P.10-11)*

In the paragraph quotation above, the choice of the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* as an essay topic could also be related to this concept. Perhaps Charlie saw the moral values in the novel as something that could provide a foundation for his understanding of the world and society. This reflected the need for self-actualization, which was the peak stage in Maslow's hierarchy, where a person reached their full potential and sought a deeper understanding of the meaning of life. Using Maslow's theory, it could be seen how the character Charlie faced challenges and grew emotionally on the journey toward self-understanding and personal actualization.

Datum 17

*I never told you that I am in shop class, did I? Well, I am in shop class, and it is my favorite class next to Bill's advanced english class. I wrote the essay for To Kill a Mockingbird last night, and I handed it in to Bill this morning. We are supposed to talk about it tomorrow during lunch period. (Chbosky, 2012, P.12-13)*

In the paragraph quotation above, when Charlie wrote an essay for his English class, we could see his effort to reach his potential in literacy. This could be linked to the need for self-actualization, which was the highest level in Maslow's hierarchy. Through the pursuit of creativity and knowledge, Charlie might have been seeking deeper and more meaningful fulfillment in his life. Thus, through an understanding of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, we could see how Charlie's activities and achievements in the novel could be interpreted as steps toward fulfilling higher needs, bringing him closer to self-actualization.

Datum 18

*First of all, Bill gave me a C on my To Kill a Mockingbird essay because he said that I run my sentences together. I am trying now to practice not to do that. He also said that I should use the vocabulary words that I learn in class like "corpulent" and "jaundice." I would use them here, but I really don't think they are appropriate in this format. (Chbosky, 2012, P.14)*

In the paragraph quotation above, Charlie was trying to improve his writing skills, as exemplified when he received a C on his essay on *To Kill a Mockingbird*. In his efforts to enhance his writing, Charlie attempted to apply the advice given by his English teacher, Bill. Maslow emphasized the importance of self-development and actualization through fulfilling individual potential. By striving to understand his teacher's suggestions and putting them into practice, Charlie could be seen as being in a stage of personal growth and development toward self-actualization.

The significance of education and self-development was also evident in Charlie's efforts to expand his vocabulary and apply it to his writing. Although Charlie felt that some words, such as *corpulent* and *jaundice*, might not have been appropriate for certain formats, his attempts to enrich his language reflected a drive toward intellectual growth, which also aligned with the concept of self-actualization in Maslow's theory. Thus, through the development of his writing skills and vocabulary enhancement, Charlie in the novel demonstrated concrete steps toward fulfilling the need for self-actualization, in line with the principles of Abraham Maslow's theory.

Datum 19

*But mostly, I was crying because I was suddenly very aware of the fact that it was me standing up in that tunnel with the wind over my face. Not caring if I saw downtown. Not even thinking about it. Because I was standing in the tunnel. And I was really there. And that was enough to make me feel infinite. (Chbosky, 2012, P.213)*

In the paragraph quotation above, Charlie's statement about feeling "infinite" can indeed be linked to the need for self-actualization in Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Charlie's experience of feeling "infinite" reflects a peak experience in self-achievement, which corresponds to Maslow's concept of self-actualization. In the context of self-actualization needs, individuals reach their full potential and personal development through self-understanding, creativity, and the accomplishment of meaningful goals.

When Charlie finds himself in the tunnel with the wind brushing his face, not caring about the cityscape or any other external thoughts, he experiences a moment of complete presence. This moment of awareness and feeling of being "infinite" is an expression of contentment in his personal existence. It shows that he is fully alive and has reached an understanding of the essence of his being. By disregarding external distractions, Charlie is able to find deep satisfaction in the present moment, which can be interpreted as a form of self-actualization, reflecting Maslow's highest stage in his hierarchy of needs.

## CONCLUSION & SUGGESTION

The researcher successfully addressed the problems of the study, demonstrating how all five levels of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs are reflected in the character of Charlie from Stephen Chbosky's *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. Each of Maslow's five hierarchies—physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, self-esteem needs, and self-actualization needs—can be observed in Charlie's journey throughout the novel. First, Charlie fulfills his physiological needs, such as consuming food, drink, and sleep, which provide him with the basic physical sustenance required for survival. Second, he meets his safety needs by developing a close relationship with his English teacher, Bill, who offers Charlie both emotional and psychological support, thus ensuring his sense of security. Next, Charlie fulfills his love and belonging needs by forming meaningful relationships with friends like Sam and Patrick. These friendships offer him emotional support and a sense of acceptance, fulfilling his need for social connection. Additionally, his participation in social activities such as parties and school events strengthens these bonds and further builds his social network. Charlie also addresses his self-esteem needs in two ways: internally, by gaining confidence in his personal abilities, and externally, by receiving recognition and positive reinforcement from others, especially through academic achievements and supportive relationships. Finally, Charlie's self-actualization needs are met through his love for literature, reading, and writing. His intellectual and creative pursuits allow him to explore his potential, express his emotions, and reflect on his life experiences, guiding him toward personal fulfillment and self-discovery. In summary, the researcher successfully demonstrated how Maslow's hierarchy of needs can be applied to the character of Charlie, illustrating his psychological development and growth throughout the novel.

In this research, the researcher only focused on Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory as it appears in the character of Charlie in the novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky. The researcher hopes that this study can help readers to have an

understanding of the hierarchy of needs theory described in Charlie's character by reading the thesis and also the novel. In addition, the researcher provides suggestions for future researchers who are interested in Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory or the novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky by using other theories or other aspects in the novel.

## REFERENCES

- Ananda, M. D. (2022). *Adolescence Crisis of Charlie In Chbosky's The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. (Undergraduate Thesis, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.)
- Bahuwa, R. (2018). An Analysis of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in *The Great Gatsby* Novel by Francis Scott Fitzgerald's. *Jurnal bahasa dan sastra inggris*, 110-119.
- Chbosky, S. (1999). *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (August 2012 ed.). New York: MTV Books.
- Citra, Y., Natsir, M., & Astuti, A. D. (2020). The Hierarchy of Needs Portrayed in Jim Preston's Character in *Passenger* (2016) Film. *Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Seni, dan Budaya*, 383-400.
- Feist, J., & Feist, G. J. (2010). *Teori kepribadian*. (Handriatno, Trans.) Jakarta: Salemba Humanika.
- Gawel, J. E. (1996). *Herzberg's theory of motivation and Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation*.
- Keeve, D. (2012). Biographical. In S. Chbosky, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. New York: MTV Books.
- Khotimah, K., Aini, F. K., & Rohmana, W. M. (2023). Traumatic Experience in the novel "The Perks of Being a Wallflower" By Stephen Chbosky's (1999) : Individual Psychology. *Journal of English Language Education and Literature*, 5-10.
- Lubis, N., & Satria, R. (2021). Hierarchy of Needs in Angie Thomas's Novel "The Hate U Give": Abraham Maslow. *Journal of Language and Literature*, 53-60.
- Maslow, A. H. (1943). A Theory of Human Motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50. 370-396.
- Minderop, A. (2010). *Psikologi Sastra. Cet. 1*. Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia.
- Nurmalasari, R. F. (2022). *Coping with Traumatic Experience in Stephen Chbosky's The Perks of Being a Wallflower Novel (1999): Individual Psychology*. (Undergraduate thesis, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta.)
- Olson, M. H., & Hergenhahn, B. R. (2013). *Pengantar Teori-Teori Kepribadian* (Ed. 8 ed.). (M. Chasan, Ed., & Y. Santoro, Trans.) Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Rahayu, M. (2009). Literature in language teaching. *LiNGUA: Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa dan Sastra*, 4(1).
- Ratna, N. K. (2007). *Estetika Sastra dan Budaya*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Ronie, F. M., & Hellystia, D. (2019). Hierarchy of needs analysis of the main character of a novel entitled *Flawed by Cecelia Ahern*. *Journal of Language and Literature*, 146-154.
- Soraya, A. I. (2018). The Hierarchy of Needs in Weiner's *Little Earthquakes*. *Lensa Budaya*, 1-12.
- Tenriuji, A., Maca, S., & Abeng, A. T. (2021). The Element of Politeness in Novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. *Journal of Linguistics, Literature & Education*, 43-51.
- Tsani, A. M. (2022). *The Hierarchy of needs reflected on the male main character in Brenda Chapman's come away (2020)*. (Undergraduate Thesis, Universitas Diponegoro Semarang.)