Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): A Critical Assessment of Maslow Theory of Needs in Nigerian Context of Quality Education and Zero Hunger

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Abstract: Sustainable development emphasises a need for a nation state to live and meet their needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. With development that is sustainable, society can in a way organise itself so that it can exist in the long run. The paper examines the sustainable development goal by interrogating Maslow's Theory of Needs in Nigeria, in the context of Quality Education and Zero Hunger with this set of objectives. Examination of the concept of Maslow's Theory of needs as it relates to Zero Hunger and investigating the concept of Maslow's Theory of needs as it relates to quality education in the Sustainable Development Goals. In analysing the Maslow's Theory of Needs versus Zero Hunger, Maslow opined that there are very few needs that are purely psychological. In his five-tier model of human needs from the bottom of the hierarchy upwards are: physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem and self actualization. As to how Maslow's hierarchy relates to learning, he opined that all students have basic needs to be met for learning to occur, and that the more needs are met, the more students will learn; therefore as an educator, it will be important to consider Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs for every student in the classroom. In conclusion, Maslow's hierarchy provides a model for how students are motivated to learn. Without the bottom layer of the hierarchy met, the students cannot reach their next level. Each student can move up in the hierarchy with proper support. The never-ending "need" of most bureaucrats, politicians are mainly responsible for the poor condition of our country. It is recommended that sustainable development can be achieved by making education a pillar of sustainable development as the societies of tomorrow will be shaped by the skills and knowledge acquired today.

Keywords: Sustainable development, Maslow's Theory, Zero Hunger, Quality Education, Millennium Development Goals.

INTRODUCTION

In 2015, the world committed to 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs), and a historic new agreement on climate change was signed. These two events signal a major shift in international commitments to both sustainability and development. However, behind this seeming consensus lies much disagreement as to what the goals and agreements mean, who should benefit, and where responsibilities lie. The politics of sustainability and development are central.

The term sustainability was first used in relation to forest management in Europe in the eighteenth century, but it was only in the late 1980s that the ideas of sustainability and development were connected. The Brundtland Commission defined sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Redclift, 2005). Especially since the first United Nations (UN) conference on environment and development in Rio in 1992, there have been a plethora of definitions, academic commentaries, and policy initiatives (Berkhout, *et al.,* 2013 and Scoones, 2017).

In this period, sustainability became a boundary term, connecting science and policy and diverse actors with multiple interests (Beck, *et al.,* 2014). However, pinning down what sustainability and development mean—technically, normatively, and politically—remains a challenge, despite the fact that the terms are gaining prominence in public and policy discourse. Today, we have sustainable economies, resources, businesses, livelihoods, cities, agricultures, and of course development. The boundary work for sustainability—building common understanding, embedded in epistemic communities, with joint commitments—has become a massive undertaking.

Sustainable development is the idea that human societies must live and meet their needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The "official" definition of sustainable development was developed for the first time in the Brundtland Report in 1987.

Specifically, sustainable development is a way of organising society so that it can exist in the long term. This means taking into account both the imperatives present and those of the future, such as the preservation of the environment and natural resources or social and economic equity.

After its adoption in September 2015, the outcome document "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", commits world leaders to fight poverty and attain sustainable development within the next 15 years. A new set of goals assures not only the urgency of development, but the fact that this development must be sustainable and boost equality.

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Abraham Harold Maslow (1908-1970) is one of the most distinguished researchers and thinkers in the realm of motivation in psychology as well as in administrative theory. His theory of motivation is immensely popular and helpful in assessing administrative performance in the aspect of Sustainable Development in the country. The Theory of Abraham Maslow on human motivation is considered as an innovative as well as pioneering work. Need Theory (1943) of Maslow is one of the most famous theories of motivation, especially regarding psychology or human motivation.

The paper entitled 'A Theory of Human Motivation' originally published in 'Psychological Review' in the year 1943. Hierarchy of needs (1943) is a motivational theory in psychology comprising a five-tier model of human needs, often depicted as hierarchical levels within a pyramid. According to the theory, from the bottom of the hierarchy upwards, the needs are: physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem and self-actualization. Needs lower down in the hierarchy must be satisfied before individuals can attend to needs higher up.

Hunger and thirst belong to the most potent need of human life and most common motivating factors of life than any other needs. Therefore for the purpose of this paper, the researcher examines two important goals which are Zero hunger and quality education out of the 17 goals of the UN Sustainable Development goals and how they have been fared in Nigerian nation using Maslow Hierarchy of Needs.

Statement of the Problem
Sustainable Development is a widely and frequently used term in this second decade of the twenty-first century. What is Sustainable Development? The most widely accepted definition is: 'Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.' (Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future). In this definition 'meets the needs of the present' is very crucial. Some very natural questions arise, is it possible to fulfil all the needs as said by Maslow in his hierarchy of needs?

To what extent are human beings satisfied in terms of their physiological need, safety need, love and belonging need, esteem need and self-actualization

need? Even if the 'needs' are not fulfilled, then how can we achieve Sustainable Development? It is against this background that this study examines Maslow Theory of Needs as a socio-political theory that can be harnessed for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with particular reference to Zero Hunger and Quality Education.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY
The purpose of this study is to examine Maslow Hierarchy of Needs and its relationship with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Specifically, the objectives of the study, include to:
- Examine the concept of Maslow Theory of needs as it relates to Zero Hunger in Sustainable Development Goals.
- Investigate the concept of Maslow Theory of needs as it relates to quality education in Sustainable Development Goals.

Summary of SDGs Targets
The summary of the SDGs are the following:
1. Universal plan and agenda to tackle some of the pressing challenges facing the world such as poverty, climate change and conflict. Poverty is at the centre of all these goals.
2. Provide the expertise to drive progress and help support countries on the path to sustainable development.
3. Build on the accelerated progress already achieved under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
The MDGs provide the foundation on which the SDGs are built. The latter relies on the structure of the former and widens its scope. The MDGs had existed and its goals were expected to be meaningfully achieved and implemented by member countries 15 years before the SDGs came into existence. It had existed for 15 years since it was established following the Millenium summit of the United Nations (UN) in 2000. All 189 UN member states, including Nigeria at that time, and at least 22 international organisations, committed to help achieve the 8 MDGs by 2015. The goals which are related to the SDGs are:

- To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- To achieve universal primary education
- To promote gender equality and empower women
- To reduce child mortality
- To improve maternal health

- To combat HIV/AIDs, malaria, and other diseases
- To ensure environmental sustainability
- To develop a global partnership for development

When we compare the SDGs with the MDGs, we observe that while the MDGs are limited and few, the SDGs are elongated and greater in number, though each goal in the two development agenda has specific targets and dates for achieving those targets. The SDGs replaced the MDGs in 2016.

Analysing the Maslow Theory of Needs Versus Zero Hunger:
The term 'need' is very important in human life. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, need is 'a lack of something requisite, desirable, or useful'. Now, this requisite, desirable, useful, lack of something is more psychological than physiological. There are very few needs that are purely psychological. He first introduced the concept of a hierarchy of needs in his 1943 paper "A Theory of Human Motivation". It is a five-tier model of human needs, often depicted as hierarchical levels within a pyramid (Maslow, 1943).

The needs, from the bottom of the hierarchy upwards, are: physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem and self-actualization. As per the theory the needs lower down in the hierarchy must be satisfied before individuals can attend to needs higher up. Maslow's theory of motivation explains it nicely. According to Maslow, 'every drive is related to the state of satisfaction or dissatisfaction of other drives.'

The physiological needs are the basic needs in human life. In Maslow's words 'if all the needs are unsatisfied, and the organism is then dominated by the physiological needs, all other needs may become simply non-existent or be pushed into the background... For the man who is extremely and dangerously hungry, no other interests exist but food. He dreams of food, he remembers food, he thinks about food, he emotes only about food, he perceives only food and he wants only food…..if only he is guaranteed food for the rest of his life, he will be perfectly happy and will never want anything more.

Life itself tends to be defined in terms of eating. Anything else will be defined as unimportant. Freedom, love, community feeling, respect, philosophy, may all be waved aside as fripperies which are useless since they fail to fill the stomach. Such a man may fairly be said to live by bread alone' (Maslow, 1943).

An individual is dominated and organised in his behaviour only by unsatisfied needs. If hunger is satisfied, it becomes unimportant in the current dynamics of the individual then he moves to the next level of need.

In the next level, it is the safety needs. Practically everything looks less important than safety, (even sometimes the physiological needs which are being satisfied, are now underestimated).

'The healthy, normal, fortunate adult in our culture is largely satisfied with his safety needs. The peaceful, smoothly running, 'good' society ordinarily makes its members feel safe enough from wild animals, extremes of temperature, criminals, assault and murder, tyranny, etc.' Of course Maslow said it in 1943. Now that we are in the second decade of the 21st century, the world and its people, their socio-political outlook has also changed a lot.

Maslow opined that 'Some neurotic adults in our society are, in many ways, like the unsafe child in their desire for safety, although in the former, it takes on a somewhat special appearance. Their reaction is often to unknown psychological dangers in a world that is perceived to be hostile, overwhelming and threatening. Such a person behaves as if a great catastrophe were almost always impending, i.e., he is usually responding as if to an emergency. His safety needs often find specific expression in a search for a protector, or a stronger person on whom he may depend.'

In the present globalised, terrorised, post modern society where uncertainty of life is in the thoughts of every individual, how far is it correct to use the term 'neurotic adults'? In fact from Maslow's point of view today most of the people are 'neurotic'.

The term 'security' has wide application. Modern individuals are always in search of security. In doing so, they are exploiting the natural resources in different ways. From CCTV to nuclear bombs all come under the concept of 'security'.

Once the individuals are secured, then 'there will emerge the love and affection and belongingness needs'. Individuals will hunger for affectionate relations with people in general, namely, for a place in his group, and he will strive with great intensity to achieve this goal.

Then comes the esteem needs. 'All people in our society (with a few pathological exceptions) have a need or desire for a stable, firmly based, (usually) high evaluation of themselves, for self-respect, or self-esteem, and for the esteem of others.'

Maslow classified it into two sets. Firstly, 'the desire for strength, for achievement, for adequacy, for confidence in the face of the world, and for independence and freedom. Secondly, we have what we may call the desire for reputation or prestige (defining it as respect or esteem from other people), recognition, attention, importance or appreciation.'

The contemporary world is a society of show off. From teenagers to old, most people are busy to show off and gain some respect or esteem among their circle or in the society. In most of the cases, individuals become very materialists. Material gain and profit matters much.

Maslow nicely said, 'Man is a perpetually wanting animal.' Such types of needs are endless. It will never end. A want that is satisfied, is no longer a want anymore. But old wants will be replaced with new ones. It is dynamic and ever changing. In doing so, sometimes they become aggressive and violent. In many cases it leads to murder or suicide.

Satisfaction of this need leads to the feelings of self-confidence, worth, strength, capability and adequacy of being useful and necessary in the world. But at the same time 'thwarting these needs produces feelings of inferiority, of weakness and of helplessness.'

At last there is the need for self-actualization. 'Even if all these needs are satisfied, we may still often (if not always) expect that a new discontent and restlessness will soon develop, unless the individual is doing what he is fitted for. A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if he is to be ultimately happy. What a man can be, he must be. This need can be referred to as self-actualization.'

Maslow admitted that it is not necessary that every time this hierarchy will function smoothly. In his words 'there are some people in whom, for instance, self-esteem seems to be more important than love…there are other, apparently innately creative people in whom the drive to creativity seems to be more important than any other counter-determinant… when a need has been satisfied for a long time, this need may be under-

evaluated. People who have never experienced chronic hunger are apt to underestimate its effects and to look upon food as a rather unimportant thing. Maslow, 1943: 45)'

Another important feature that Maslow pointed out is the 'Unconscious character of needs'. These needs are neither necessarily conscious nor unconscious. On the whole, however, in the average person, they are more often unconscious rather than conscious.

Unconscious motivations would on the whole be rather more important than the conscious motivations. Human psychology is very much peculiar as well as astonishing and full of mystery. It is a fact that we are very much conscious about our own self. At the same time it is also a fact that we exactly don't know our own self. Maybe this is why consciously we change, maybe this is why consciously many times we love the change. What we actually want is always a mystery, even to our own self.

At the end Maslow talked about a different class of people, those who 'are the ones that involve ideals, high social standards, high values and the like. With such values people become martyrs; they give up everything for the sake of a particular ideal, or value. They are the 'strong' people who can easily weather disagreement or opposition, who can swim against the stream of public opinion and who can stand up for the truth at great personal cost.' The present society needs this type of person to fight against corruption, to bring equality, to save the world, to preserve the natural resources, to save the future generation and to save human civilization.

Maslow Hierarchy of Needs and Education
How does Maslow's Hierarchy Relate to Learning? All students have basic needs to be met for learning to occur. The more needs that are met, the more students will learn. Maslow's hierarchy, developed by Abraham Maslow in 1954, is a way of organising the basic needs of students on different levels (McLeod, 2007). The more levels that are met, the more a student will learn. Maslow's hierarchy of needs applies especially to students with exceptionalities, because many times students' with exceptionalities needs are more difficult to meet.

Maslow's Hierarchy is directly related to learning through motivation. In order for students to succeed in the classroom, they must be motivated to learn. When all levels of Maslow's Hierarchy of

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Needs are met, students are at their full potential for learning (McLeod, 2007). For example, a student would not be able to enter a classroom with an empty stomach and the fear of dying from starvation and successfully learn. Each student has needs that must be met in order to maximise learning. The higher up in the hierarchy a student is, the more levels that are met, the better the motivation and therefore the more learning that the student will experience (Ayeni, 2015).

How Are Students With Exceptionalities Affected by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs? Students with exceptionalities are especially affected by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. According to Norman Kunc, all children are children and all children need to feel a sense of belonging (Kunc, 2012). In order for students with exceptionalities to be motivated to learn, they must have a sense of belonging. Belonging, the third level of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, may be difficult for students with exceptionalities to obtain because they may have learning or physical disabilities that may set them apart from their peers. Mislabeled students in many schools suffer with difficulty in school because basic needs of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs are not being met. These students are typically students of low-socioeconomic status. Because students of low-socioeconomic status are not learning at the same rate as their peers, they are often mislabeled as "learning disabled". Many times, however, these students are simply not having the lower levels of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs met (Faye, 1983).

Many of these students may be too worried about when their next meal is or where they are going to sleep that night to even worry about what they are learning in school. It is important to separate true learning disabilities from students who just need to have their basic needs in life met in order to learn. By separating these two populations, the student's needs for learning can more easily be met by the district or teacher.

Maslow Theory of Needs in Application to Quality Education
As an educator, it will be important to consider Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs for every student in the classroom. It will, however, be even more important to specifically link Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, with students with exceptionalities, and specific practices in the classroom. Segregating students into special education classrooms will not provide a sense of belonging for students with exceptionalities in the school. For this reason,

students should be included in the least restrictive environment possible.

For example, a student who does poorly on English tests, should not be put into a separate special education classroom, but rather be put into a general education English classroom with the proper support for that student to succeed. Universal Design is a great way to give students with exceptionalities a sense of belonging. Universal design allows a teacher to plan ahead of time to avoid any disasters for a student who has a physical or intellectual disability (Hall, 2012). For example, if a student in your classroom uses a wheelchair, it will be important to make the classroom as handicap accessible as possible before school even starts. This way, a student will feel "normal" because he or she will easily be able to manoeuvre through the classroom just like his or her peers.

This way, all students will benefit, and the student with the exceptionality will never be different from his or her peers. By making each student the same, a student with an exceptionality will have a better sense of belonging. It is important to recognize each individual student's strengths and help him or her to excel in those areas providing the student with a sense of worth. This relates specifically to the esteem level of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. This way, each student, even the students with exceptionalities, are participating in the class and receiving feedback.

SUMMARY

There appears to be a consensus among stakeholders that Nigeria does not have the capacity to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 (SDG Index, 2022). One of the biggest stumbling blocks to the achievement of the goals is that the country requires $350 billion to achieve the goals. $350 billion is about 800% more than the entirety of the country's 2022 budget and 37.28% of this budget will be used to pay debt. Stakeholders had expressed doubt in the country's ability to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Lack of planning and poor implementation are some of the reasons identified for the country's failure to achieve these goals. Some other reasons are the country's budgetary allocations and setting priorities right which have gone in the opposite direction of the achievement of the goals.

Accurate data, citizen engagement and rigorous monitoring and evaluation are identified as critical

to set Nigeria on the path to achieving SDGs. This will probably not happen in time for the deadline but Nigeria could at least be on the path to achieving the goals at a time farther than 2030 but hopefully not too far in the future (https://www.dataphyte.com/latest-reports/development/can-sdgs-be-achieved-in-nigeria-before-2030-according-to-data-not-likely/).

CONCLUSION

Maslow's hierarchy provides a model for how students are motivated to learn. Without the bottom layer of the hierarchy met, students cannot reach the next level. Each level, once met, allows students the ability and motivation to learn. Each student can move up in the hierarchy with the proper support. Students with exceptionalities especially may need attention paid to the hierarchy. The biggest hindrance of students with exceptionalities is the lack of sense of belonging. Through several methods, students with exceptionalities can feel a sense of belonging and then move up in the hierarchy.

Moreover, the never ending 'need' of most of the bureaucrats, politicians are mainly responsible for the poor condition of our country. As we have discussed earlier, the human mind is mysterious. Even after fulfilling all the basic needs, esteem needs, these people get involved in corruption. The number of such corrupted people in this country is not less. In fact the number is huge. Maslow in his theory bypassed the need of such type of people's need as 'Unconscious

Character of needs' and did not give too much importance. Unfortunately, in Nigeria today, the country is bedevilled with this category of people who are corrupt which in many cases are the one in the helms of affairs in the country. There is a need to change the scenario. It is possible only by unveiling the unknown world of the human mind, their desires and needs or by moulding the mentality of the individuals through one of the Sustainable Development Goals which is education.

As UNESCO stated 'Education is a pillar of sustainable development. The societies of tomorrow will be shaped by the skills and knowledge acquired today. **S**ustainable

development cannot be achieved by technological solutions, political regulation or financial instruments alone.

Achieving sustainable development requires a change in the way we think and act, and consequently a transition to sustainable lifestyles, consumption and production patterns. Only education and learning at all levels and in all social contexts can bring about this critical change. Education is a fundamental lever of change contributing to poverty eradication, zero hunger, sustainable development, equity and inclusiveness." (UNESCO, 2011).

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Source of support: Nil; **Conflict of interest:** Nil.