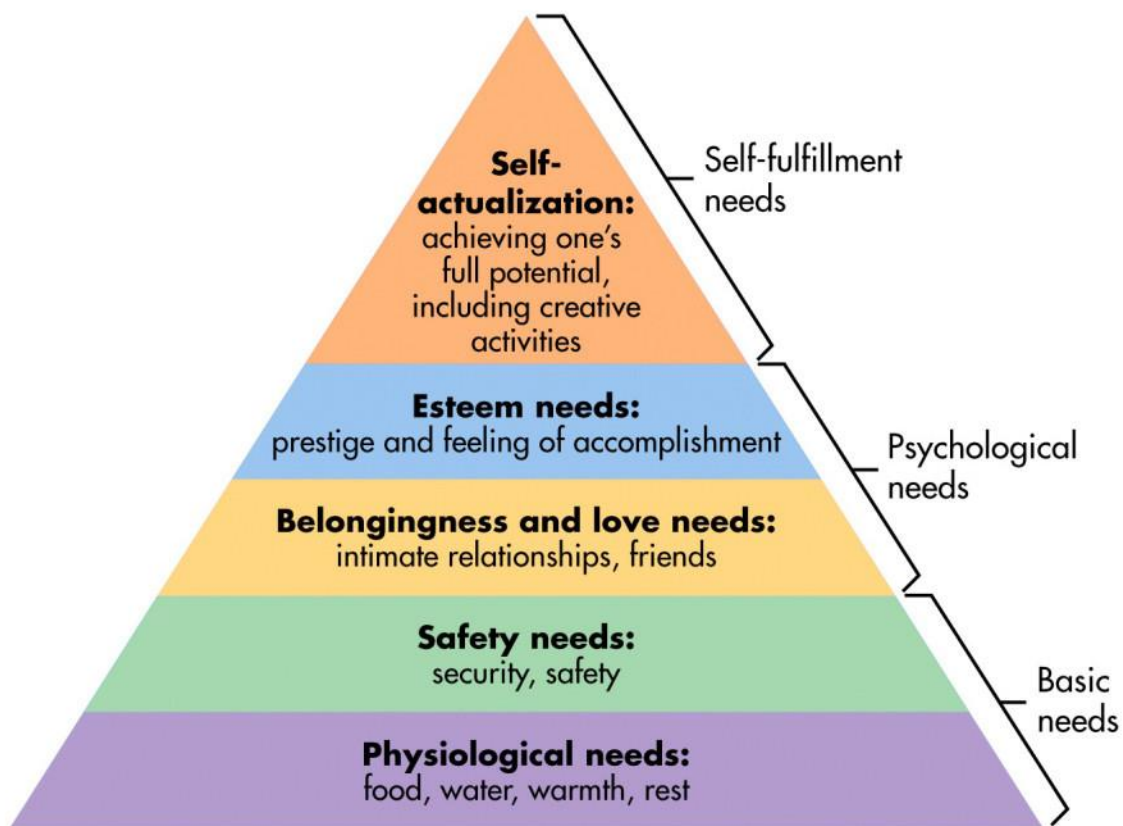


How Maslow's hierarchy of needs apply in
Asian country context

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In 1943, Abraham Maslow identified hierarchy of needs and it shows how people prioritize their needs. Maslow's hierarchy of needs can be used for identified employees' requirements and consumer behavior. Psychologically, this is a motivational theory which explain different level of human needs.

Figure 01 – Maslaw's hierarchy of needs.

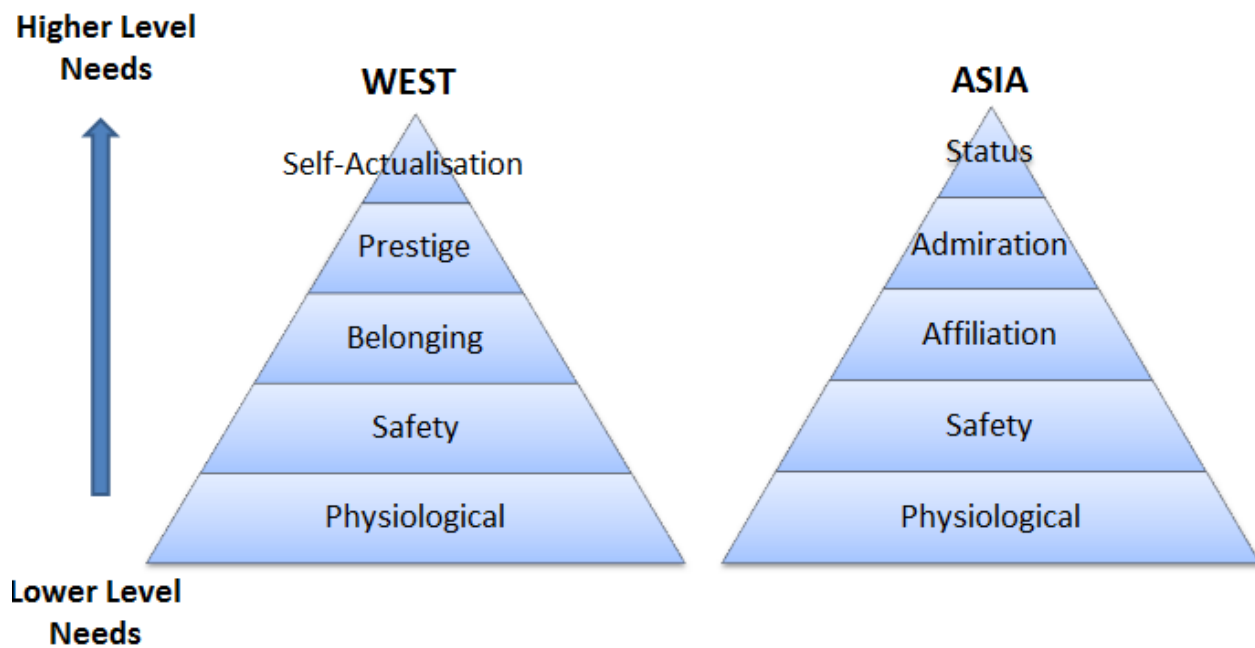


As illustrated above figure, five stages model can be categorized as basic needs, psychological and self fulfillment needs (Diasz, 2017). Further these five level of needs can be divided into two as deficiency and growth needs. The first four levels are categorized as deficiency needs and once these needs are met and fulfilled, motivation for the needs will be decreased. Top level or self-actualization is recognized as growth needs and even though this requirement is fulfilled, motivation for it will be increased (Maslow, 1970).

However, some argue that this hierarchical needs are changed according to the scenario. Schuette and Cirliante argue that Maslow hierarchy of needs model are not applicable for Asian cultures.

According to Schuette and Cirliante, basic needs of the hierarchy are common for any society however, highest level of the hierarchy can be changed based on the different cultural and social conditions of the Asia (Robbins, 2001). Top three levels which mainly represent social and psychological needs are changed from the western society. In Asian context, needs such as belongingness and love, esteem needs and self-actualization are replaced by affiliation, admiration and status (Robbins,2001).

Figure 02 – difference Maslow's hierarchy of needs in West and Asia.



In Asian culture, society value interpersonal relationships and social interaction more than self-actualization. Further Hofstede (1980) also argue that Maslow's hierarchy does not applicable for outside of the western world and he further argue that culture highly affects to the needs of the people (Robbins, 2001). Especially, since western countries are highly individualistic oriented, self-actualization is much higher concern. Asian community are more family based and generally most of the people get love and care from the family and relatives. Therefore more than belongingness and love, they expect affiliation needs. The next level is admiration needs which expect respect from affiliated group. And the status is top of the Asian hierarchy of needs (Quelch and Hoff, 1986). Therefore Asian highly consider brand value of the product.

According to Schuette & Ciarlante it is arguable whether the level of self-actualization exists as a personally-directed need for Asian consumers. Instead, "the willingness to improve the image of an individual through contributions to society" may be a socially-directed need (Jerome, 2013). On the other hand, in western individualistic culture, personal need are considered as highest level of needs but it is not same in Asian region which has more collective culture. Asian countries prioritize on socially directed needs (Jerome, 2013). Further, there is less positive attitude for leisure in Asian countries compared to western countries. In Asian cultures, leisure activities are related to group engagements, learning and status elevation. Religious background of Asia is also highly influenced to the life of people. In the Western world, there is a linear relationship between professional life, leisure and satisfaction of life, whereas in most of the Asian countries, relationship between profession and satisfaction need to be achieved through hard working (Jerome, 2013).

Therefore, companies need to consider these cultural changes and attitude to decide marketing and branding strategies. Companies such as Coca-Cola, Nestle, McDonalds and Pepsi use different marketing and branding strategies in Asia compared to Europe and USA. Coca-Cola advertising campaign focus on cultural events of the countries. Further, McDonalds' has added some local taste to their menu in some Asian countries. However, how to use Maslow's hierarchy for multinational companies to adopt for Asian market need to further discuss with practical scenarios.

Nescafe Dolce Gusto project in Asia

Nestle firstly introduced Dolce Gusto machines in 2006 in Malaysia as an alternative for their premium brand Nespresso. Dolce Gusto is a machine that could make instant coffee drinks such as cappuccinos, espresso, latte macchiato and etc. Nestle positioned this product as sophisticated brand but it was available for affordable price. First, company promoted the product through email marketing campaign to improve the product awareness. However, once Facebook became popular all over the world, it became the most effective marketing channel (Husain, 2018).

Latter, company identified that having coffee is not an isolated activity and people in Asian region like to have a coffee with someone else or as a group. Further customers prefer to publish premium product or service that they experience in social media. According to hierarchy of needs, people in Asia highly consider on affiliation and status. Therefore company focused on social media campaign. Many customers had coffee together as group and posted about coffee time with various

hashtags. Engagement of followers was very strong. Customers were posted this brand on social media heavily and Nestle take these user generated contents to their marketing campaign (Husain, 2018). This was highly successful in many countries of Asia and according to research, 53% of millennials revealed that these user generated contents has influenced their purchasing decision.

On the other hand, having a coffee is still a way to connect the people. Therefore, instead of social media campaign, Nestle also started a campaign to attract this market segment too. Company mainly focused on cultural events such as Chinese New Year for this promotion campaign (Husain, 2018). Through all of this, Nestle able to get competitive position in Asian market over competitors.

McDonalds's evolving strategies in Asia

McDonalds start at more individualistic and fast pace setting. Therefore, it was a challenge to start the operation in Asia. Therefore company capitalized traditional values in Asian region to attract the customers. Asian culture highly value the relationships with the family and children and McDonalds addressed these values in their marketing campaign. In Beijing, McDonalds' slogan was "Get together at McDonalds; enjoy the happiness of family life" (Cai, 2003). Through this, simply company position itself in the market according to Asian culture. In Asia, McDonalds operate as more into family restaurant not just be a fast food chain. Therefore, there is warmth and welcoming feeling including fast operation process. Further, company advertising program focus on all children, young and elder generation. Generally, elder generation view these kind of companies as a threat for their tradition and erosion their cultural value. However, advertising campaign of the company highlighted warmth, comfort and enhance its image as family restaurant. McDonalds mainly focus on children as a target market in Asia. It also helped to identify McDonalds as a family restaurant. They hosted birthday parties for children, organized games and distribute gifts to create warm and friendly environment for children (Cai, 2003). Therefore, culture is different from western fast food chain. All these environment and attitude of the company focus on Asians' main priorities such as affiliation and admiration.

These two companies are great examples that illustrate how global companies develop their strategies and change their operations to adopt to the Asian culture. Collectivistic attitude of Asia make the different of Asian needs from Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Companies need to identify this properly to succeed in Asian market.

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