

Prosiding Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan
Universitas Negeri Jakarta
Homepage: https://journal.unj.ac.id/unj/index.php/semnas-ps
Vol. 4 No. 1, Bulan 2026, halaman: 811-826
E-ISSN: xxxx-xxxx

Moral Judgment Analysis from the Perspective of Basic Human Needs

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Riwayat Artikel

Submited: 23-11-2026
Accepted: 23-11-2026
Published: 24-11-2026

Abstrak

Moral judgment adalah alasan yang digunakan di dalam memutuskan baik dan buruk, benar dan salah. Moral judgment dikategorikan ke dalam level konvensional, prakonvensional, dan postkonvensional. Upaya meningkatkan level moral judgment penting dilakukan, terlebih dalam kondisi terjadi pelanggaran-pelanggaran norma, hukum, dan peraturan. Moral judgment yang matang menghindarkan individu membuat keputusan moral yang merugikan diri dan orang lain. Artikel ini bertujuan mengemukakan 14 hasil penelitian tentang moral judgment di beberapa lokasi di Indonesia, kemudian menganalisisnya dari perspektif kebutuhan dasar manusia. Analisis menggunakan studi dokumen. Hasil analisis menunjukkan moral judgment subjek penelitian dominan pada tingkat konvensional. Penelusuran melalui wawancara informal terhadap beberapa subjek menyimpulkan bahwa dominasi level konvensional tersebut berkaitan dengan kebutuhan dasar harga diri dan sosial.

Kata kunci: Moral judgment; konvensional; kebutuhan dasar manusia.

Abstract

Moral judgment refers to the reasoning used to determine what is good or bad and what is right or wrong. Moral judgment is categorized into conventional, preconventional, and postconventional levels. Efforts to improve the level of moral judgment are important, particularly in situations involving violations of norms, laws, and regulations. Mature moral judgment helps individuals avoid making moral decisions that are detrimental to themselves and others. This article aims to present 14 research findings on moral judgment from several locations in Indonesia and subsequently analyze them from the perspective of basic human needs. The analysis employed a document study. The results indicate that the moral judgment of the research subjects was predominantly at the conventional level. Informal interviews with several subjects suggested that this dominance of the conventional level was associated with basic needs for self-esteem and social belonging.

Keywords: *Moral judgment; conventional; basic human needs.*

Prosiding ***Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan-Universitas Negeri Jakarta*** *diterbitkan oleh Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Negeri Jakarta*



PENDAHULUAN

The Importance of Moral Judgment

Moral judgment is a theory of morality within the cognitive tradition. Moral judgment refers to a person's thinking in determining right and wrong, good and bad, appropriate and inappropriate, and proper and improper in relation to a decision, action, or event. Moral judgment

does not examine the content of a behavior; rather, it examines the considerations underlying that behavior. The ability to weigh what is good and bad, right and wrong, appropriate and inappropriate, and proper and improper by using a higher level of moral judgment is expected to be reflected in behavior. Setiono (1982) stated that the higher the level of moral judgment, the more consistent the relationship between what a person thinks and what the person does. Beyond this, mature moral judgment contains universal values such as justice and human rights, which can contribute to a peaceful society. This contribution of moral judgment underscores the importance of developing mature moral judgment in every individual, given its crucial role as a psychological aspect. Theodore Roosevelt, a former President of the United States, stated, "To educate a person in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society"; Heraclitus stated, "Character is destiny."

Building moral quality by paying attention to the fulfillment of basic human needs—that is, needs that require fulfillment and are expected to be developed—will contribute to the development of moral judgment and, consequently, to positive behavior.

The ideal expectation that individuals' moral judgment should develop optimally has not yet been sufficiently realized in society. Actions are often performed without mature moral awareness, particularly during adolescence, when emotional development can still be fluctuating and unstable. Adolescents need guidance so that they can comprehensively and clearly understand the rational moral reasons underlying their actions, ranging from situations that are not problematic but require a choice, to actions that tend to be wrong or right, and even to actions that are criminal in nature. For example, a student must decide whether to participate in a scouting activity, as agreed with school friends, to help younger students who are having difficulty mastering learning materials, or to accompany a younger sibling who has severe influenza to the hospital. The two activities are scheduled at the same time. The student's decision should be based on mature moral judgment, at least by considering the interests of the greater number of people and humanitarian considerations.

In moral situations, adolescents need to be accustomed to the awareness that they should consistently use mature moral judgment rather than act impulsively or according to an egocentric morality that may harm themselves and others. Therefore, this paper addresses the questions of what moral judgment is and how its interaction with basic human needs can contribute to the development of moral judgment and the expected behavior.

The objective of this paper is to analyze moral judgment from the perspective of basic human needs. Through this analysis, it can be understood that moral judgment is related to basic human needs in developing more mature moral judgment, which may have an impact on positive behavior.

Moral judgment serves as a filter for decisions and actions in everyday life as individuals face current developments and changes that contain moral risks. Together with mature moral judgment, individuals are expected to make appropriate moral decisions.

METODE PENELITIAN

This study employs a descriptive-qualitative literature review approach. The data sources consist of sixteen research studies on moral judgment conducted in various locations across Indonesia (undergraduate theses, master's theses, doctoral dissertations, and journal articles, 1982–2025), which were purposively selected based on their relevance to the topic. Data were collected through document review, supplemented by informal interviews with several subjects as a form of triangulation. Data analysis was conducted using content analysis, which involved identifying trends in the levels of moral judgment in these documents and then relating them to Maslow's five categories of basic human needs.

HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

Concept of Moral Judgment

In several sources, the term moral judgment is used interchangeably with moral thinking and moral reasoning (Setiono, 1982). Within cognitive-developmental theory, morality does not examine moral behavior itself, but rather the reasons underlying the behavior. Kohlberg (in Lickona, 1976) emphasized that morality is a philosophical or ethical concept rather than a behavioral concept. The essential structure of morality is the principle of justice, and the core of justice is the distribution of rights and obligations regulated by concepts of equal rights for every individual (equality) and reciprocal relationships or exchanges of rights among individuals (reciprocity). Justice is a moral principle, not a rule. Moral principles do not allow exceptions, whereas rules may allow exceptions. Kohlberg stated, "By a moral principle we mean a mode of choosing which is universal, a rule of choosing we want all people to adopt always in all situations…" (Kohlberg in Lickona, 1976). A moral principle is not only a rule of action but also a reason for action. As a reason for action, justice is called respect for persons (Lickona, 1976).

Moral Judgment in Cognitive Theory

There are three grand theories in psychology that address moral development: psychoanalytic theory, behaviorism, and cognitive theory (Aronfreed in Lickona, 1976; Kohlberg in Lickona, 1976). Psychoanalytic theory tends to explain behavior through direct teaching. It generally addresses relatively chronic problems that require in-depth therapy and focuses on the client's past experiences. Behaviorism changes behavior through reinforcement by applying rewards and punishments. Rewards are given to strengthen desired behavior, while punishment is used to prevent or eliminate undesirable behavior. Punishment is used when rewards are ineffective. Cognitive theory, meanwhile, focuses on changing human thought with the expectation that this will have a positive impact on desired behavior. Cognitive theory limits its analysis to cognition and does not include overt behavior as behaviorism does. Cognitive theory emphasizes human beings as thinking creatures; therefore, changing human beings means changing their thinking.

Cognitive-developmental theory, which examines human thinking abilities, was proposed by Jean Piaget, while the theory of moral judgment was developed by Lawrence Kohlberg. The theoretical orientations of Kohlberg and Piaget belong to the cognitive-developmental tradition (Setiono, 1982). According to Piaget (Ginsburg & Opper, 1979), there are four periods of human cognitive development: 1) the sensorimotor period (birth–2 years), 2) the preoperational period (2–7 years), 3) the concrete operational period (7–11 years), and 4) the formal operational period (12–15 years). The ages for each period are approximate.

The characteristics of each period are as follows: 1) During the sensorimotor period, children's mental activity begins with spontaneity and reflexes, such as blinking and sucking their fingers, and then develops into habits and subsequently into intelligence. 2) During the preoperational period, children's thinking is limited in its ability to perform actual physical operations. This period involves the development of symbolic functions; for example, a stick may be treated as a rifle. Children's thinking is egocentric, meaning that it is limited to their own perspective, and they are not yet able to take the perspectives of others. 3) During the concrete operational period, egocentric thinking begins to decrease. Children begin to think in different dimensions and can perform simple logical operations in concrete situations. For example, when the same amount of water is placed into a taller, narrower glass and a shorter, wider glass, the water in the taller glass may appear higher. Children in this period can understand that the amount of water is actually the same. They understand principles of logical equivalence (for example, if A = B and B = C, then A = C), although their thinking remains limited to the here and now. In solving problems, they still tend to use trial and error. 4) During the formal operational period, individuals are able to think abstractly and hypothetically-deductively and to solve problems systematically. Individuals can formulate hypotheses because they have developed abstract thinking. Through abstract thinking, they can formulate hypotheses within a framework of reasoning rather than through trial and error and can solve problems logically and systematically.

Levels and Stages of Moral Judgment

Moral judgment consists of the preconventional, conventional, and postconventional levels (Arbuthnot & Faust; Campbell & Christopher, 1996; Smetana & Turiel in Adams & Berzonsky, 2003; Steinberg, 2002; Reimer, Paolitto, & Hersh, 1983; Kohlberg in Lickona, 1976; Velasquez, 2002; Eckensberger & Zimba in Berry, Dasen, & Saraswathi, 2001; Menanti & Murad, 2015; Menanti, 2005; Menanti, 2008a; Menanti, 2008b; Menanti, 2003; Menanti, 1990). Each level consists of two stages, resulting in six stages of moral judgment. Kohlberg later revised the model to five stages because very few individuals reached Stage 6. Individuals who reach Stage 6 may be exemplified by Gandhi and Martin Luther King. The levels and stages of moral judgment according to Lawrence Kohlberg, as presented by the experts above, are shown in Table 1.

Moral Judgment Level	Moral Judgment Stage
Preconventional	1: Heteronomous morality 2: Individualism, instrumental purpose, and exchange
Conventional	3: Mutual interpersonal expectations, relationships, and interpersonal conformity 4: Social system
Postconventional	5: Social contract or utility and individual rights 6: Universal ethical principles

Table 1. Levels and Stages of Moral Judgment

Table 1 shows that moral judgment at the preconventional level involves obedience to a person who has authority over the individual (Stage 1), while Stage 2 involves moral compliance to avoid punishment and obtain rewards. At the conventional level, individuals seek to be regarded as good people (Stage 3), while Stage 4 emphasizes conformity to the approval of others and to societal rules. At the postconventional level, moral judgment prioritizes the interests of the greater number of people (Stage 5), while Stage 6 is based on principles and one's own conscience. More specifically:

Moral judgment at the preconventional level (Stage 1: heteronomous morality) refers to morality based on physical punishment and obedience to authorities such as parents and teachers. Morality or truth is equated with the truth defined by the authority, and punishment is avoided. At Stage 2 (individualism, instrumental purpose, and exchange), children view what is right as what fulfills their own needs and desires and those of others through reciprocal relationships, similar to a pragmatic exchange. For example, a child may think, “Father took me for a motorcycle ride, so I will help clean Father's motorcycle.” Right and wrong are interpreted as instrumental values that provide satisfaction to oneself and others.

At the conventional level (Stage 3: mutual interpersonal expectations, relationships, and interpersonal conformity), an individual's morality refers to interpersonal relationships in order to be regarded as a good person. Moral motivation is to maintain interpersonal relationships, fulfill others' expectations, and remain loyal to the group. An action is judged as good or bad depending on others' approval. Moral judgment at Stage 4 (the social system) is oriented toward maintaining rules, order, and law as a means, rather than as an internal conscience. Right conduct is defined as fulfilling one's duties in society and maintaining social order. The individual's loyalty is to the law rather than to people, as in Stage 3.

At the postconventional level (Stage 5: social contract or utility and individual rights), individuals view what is right as upholding rights, basic values, and the agreement of the broader society, even when this creates conflict with laws and regulations. Individuals may regard certain values as absolute, such as freedom from oppression, which should be upheld regardless of public opinion. At Stage 6 (universal ethical principles), individuals determine what is right based on personal principles intended to apply to all humanity. These principles are accepted on the basis of fundamental understandings of justice, equal human rights, and respect for the dignity of every individual. Stage 6 therefore involves consideration based on universal moral principles.

Mechanism for Increasing Moral Judgment

Menanti (2008) proposed that increases in moral judgment follow a particular mechanism, beginning with social interaction, followed by role-taking, socio-cognitive conflict, and resolution of the socio-cognitive conflict using a level of moral judgment higher than the individual's current level (N+1). Social interaction requires frequency and intensity. Frequent and intensive interaction enables individuals to encounter and experience moral events involving themselves and others. Interacting with people who differ in character, perspective, emotional and social maturity, and habits enriches an individual's moral insight. Such social interaction provides an environment in which role-taking can occur.

Role-taking is the ability to adopt the social perceptions or perspectives of other people (Reimer, Paolitto, & Hersh, 1983; Kohlberg in Lickona, 1976). Lickona (in Lickona, 1976) provided a broader definition, explaining that role-taking is the ability to see and interpret other people's thoughts and feelings and to understand their roles or places within the environment or society. Arbuthnot and Faust (1981) further explained that role-taking involves not only knowing other people's feelings but also recognizing that others may have perspectives different from one's own. Role-taking includes accepting that other people have their own perspectives and understanding the complex relationships between similar and different perspectives. In role-taking, individuals understand other people's abilities, attributes, desires, expectations, feelings, emotions, impulses, reactions, and thoughts (Arbuthnot & Faust, 1981).

Regarding moral conflict, Riegel (1976) and Erikson (1963) (in Arbuthnot & Faust, 1981) stated that cognitive-moral conflict is generally a basis for moral development. Similarly, Arbuthnot and Faust (1981) stated that moral development is stimulated by the results of cognitive conflict. Cognitive-moral conflict is a contradiction or dilemma experienced by an individual when deciding what is right or wrong, good or bad, appropriate or inappropriate. Cognitive-moral conflict resembles a puzzle or a state of curiosity when facing an interesting problem that invites thought and problem solving. Disequilibrium within the individual creates a drive to restore equilibrium, which occurs when the individual is able to resolve the problem through structural reorganization (Arbuthnot & Faust, 1981).

The mechanism for increasing moral judgment—social interaction → role-taking → cognitive-moral conflict and resolution of cognitive-moral conflict—was proposed by Menanti and Murad (2025), as shown in Figure 1.

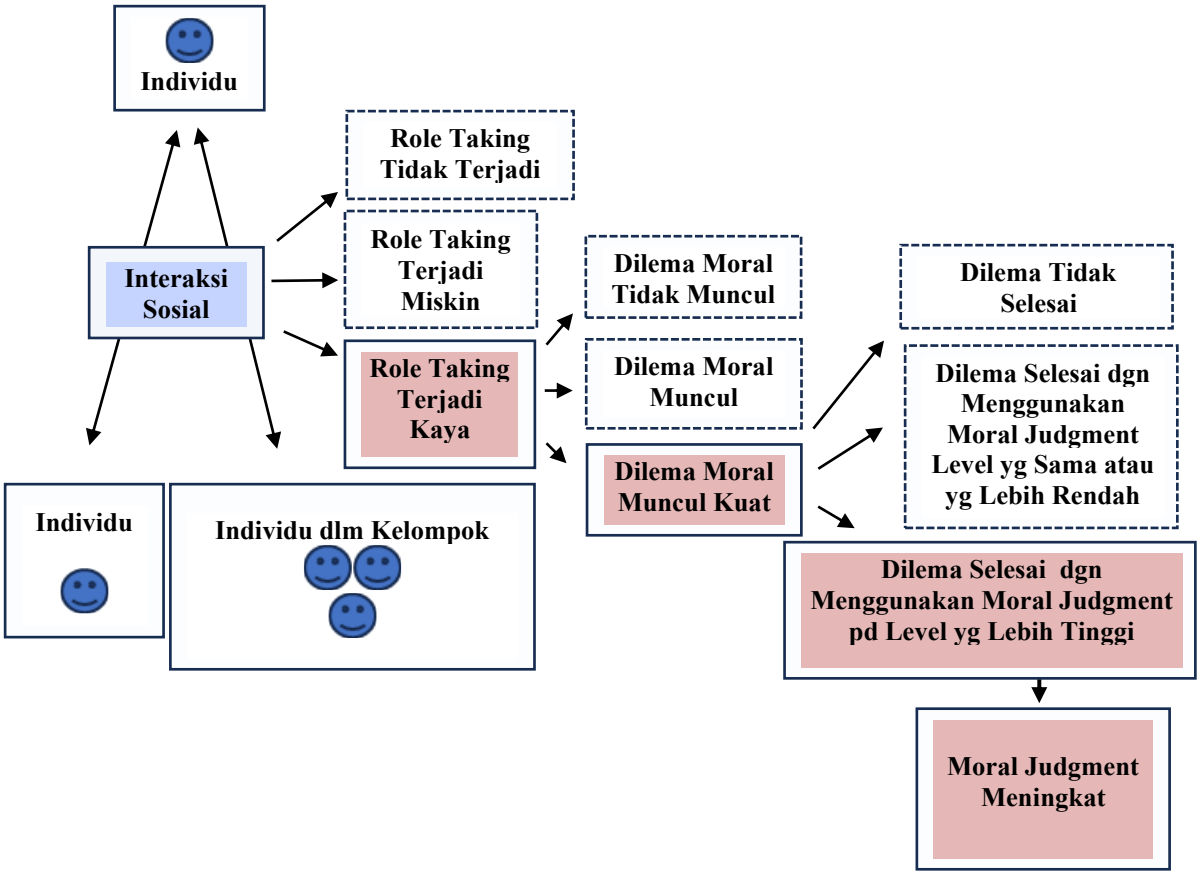


Figure 1. Mechanism of Increasing Moral Judgment

Figure 1 shows that individuals interact with other individuals, groups, and society directly or through cases and events obtained from various information sources, such as social media. In social interaction, role-taking may or may not occur within the individual. Role-taking occurs when the individual experiences some or all of the following: seeing or encountering the views, needs, and desires of other individuals; identifying similarities and differences between others and oneself; accepting or rejecting differences in viewpoints; and recognizing the existence of oneself and others as well as the connections among them. Rich role-taking experiences generate socio-cognitive conflict, whereas shallow social interaction may not produce cognitive-moral conflict. Socio-cognitive conflict, a state of disequilibrium, motivates the individual to restore equilibrium and thus resolve the problem that generated the conflict. If the individual can resolve the problem, equilibrium is achieved. However, if the socio-cognitive conflict cannot be resolved, the process of increasing moral judgment stops.

When socio-cognitive conflict is repeatedly and consistently resolved using moral judgment values at a stage higher than the individual's current stage (N+1), moral judgment increases. If the individual uses moral judgment values at the same stage (N=N) or at a lower stage (N−1), moral judgment remains at the same level.

Increasing Moral Judgment

The goal of moral education within the cognitive-developmental perspective is to increase the stage of moral judgment to the highest possible stage. Improvement should be carried out according to the factors required in the process of increasing moral judgment, including the occurrence of role-taking, cognitive-moral conflict, and the individual's ability to resolve such

conflict using a stage higher than the stage currently possessed. This process should consider the following:

1) Moral judgment, cognitive-moral conflict, and role-taking do not develop naturally; they require stimulation from the environment. Reimer and colleagues (1983) stated that we cannot assume that students will naturally provide cognitive conflict for themselves or automatically take the perspective of others.
2) The initial step is to place individuals in varied social-interaction situations that provide opportunities for role-taking and cognitive-moral conflict. Such situations may arise through friendships with people who differ in age, education, personality, experience, and occupation, as well as through interaction with people who have higher levels of moral judgment.
3) Social interaction is not limited to direct interaction; it may also occur through mass media such as television and newspapers, which present events that encourage role-taking. Role-taking opportunities stimulate moral development (Reimer and colleagues, 1979).
4) In the school environment, individuals should experience warm behavior from teachers and other school staff, accompanied by moral dialogue. Schools should avoid treating students with excessive criticism, judging them, or treating them as individuals who are powerless to express themselves, including in speaking and expressing opinions.
5) In the family, individuals should experience parenting patterns that provide space for dialogue with parents and other family members.
6) Individuals should receive moral-judgment development exercises in structured situations designed to encourage the sharing of opinions, experiences, desires, and other perspectives. Menanti (1990) conducted a quasi-experimental study involving male and female adolescent children of Indonesian Armed Forces personnel in Perumahan Kodam I Bukit Barisan. The study used a pretest-posttest control group design, with focus group discussion as the treatment. The results showed that: 1) the average moral judgment score of participants who joined the focus group discussion was higher than that of participants who did not; and 2) the focus group whose members had varied moral judgment stages (Stages 3, 4, and 5) had a higher average score than the group whose members were at the same stage (Stage 3). These findings were supported by increases in moral judgment stages.
7) Individuals should have opportunities to face cognitive-moral conflict situations so that they become accustomed to thinking through and experiencing such situations themselves. Parents and teachers should not take over these cognitive-moral conflicts; instead, they should stimulate them.

Basic Human Needs

One of Maslow's most well-known theories is the hierarchy of needs, also known as the basic-needs theory. This theory is motivational because basic needs are understood as drivers of human behavior. Goble (1987) stated that a fundamental and distinctive concept of Maslow's theory is that human beings are motivated by a number of basic needs. These needs are psychological and physiological. A characteristic may be regarded as a basic need if its absence causes illness, its presence prevents illness, and its restoration cures illness (Goble, 1987). At a less severe level, the concept of illness may take the form of emotional discomfort.

Maslow proposed that human beings have five basic needs arranged hierarchically. This means that once a lower-level need has been fulfilled to a minimum standard, a higher-level need will subsequently seek fulfillment. They are called basic needs because they are present in every human being and demand fulfillment. Fulfillment of basic needs does not mean satisfying one need while ignoring the others; rather, all needs are present simultaneously, with different profiles across individuals. Differences may occur in the dominant needs and in the success with which those needs are fulfilled.

The five basic needs are interrelated. For example, while an individual is satisfying the need for food (a physiological need), the individual may simultaneously satisfy self-esteem and safety needs by eating without borrowing money and by seeking healthy food at a clean restaurant even if it is more expensive.

The hierarchy begins with physiological needs, followed by safety needs, love and belongingness needs, self-esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. 1) Physiological needs are the most basic needs, such as food, drink, rest, and oxygen. 2) Safety needs involve the need to feel secure, such as being free from fear and anxiety. 3) Love and belongingness needs involve the need to be loved, to belong, to love others, and to become part of a particular group. Individuals maintain relationships with other people or groups to fulfill these needs. 4) Self-esteem needs involve the need to feel worthy or valued by others. Feelings of worth or being valued arise from how the environment treats the individual as interpreted by that individual, such as through parenting patterns from early childhood and treatment by family members, friends, teachers, and lecturers. Internal sources of self-worth may include achievement, independence, physical attractiveness, wealth, occupation, status, and one's home and place of residence. External sources of esteem include acceptance, prestige, recognition, and attention. Healthy self-esteem grows from reasonable appreciation by others rather than empty praise. 5) Self-actualization is the need to realize one's potential optimally and achieve peak experiences.

Schultz (1977) stated that Maslow discussed several specific characteristics of self-actualizing individuals: 1) an efficient perception of reality, 2) a general acceptance of nature, others, and oneself, 3) spontaneity, simplicity, and naturalness, 4) a focus on problems outside themselves, 5) a need for privacy and independence, 6) autonomous functioning, 7) a continued freshness of appreciation, 8) mystical or peak experiences, 9) social interest, 10) interpersonal relations, 11) a democratic character structure, 12) discrimination between means and ends and between good and evil, 13) an unhostile sense of humor, 14) creativeness, and 15) resistance to enculturation.

Jarvis (2000) described the characteristics as follows: 1) an accurate perception of reality, 2) openness to new experiences, 3) a tendency to seek peak experiences, 4) clear moral standards, 5) a strong sense of humor, 6) a sense of brotherhood with all human beings, 7) close friendships, 8) a democratic attitude in accepting others, 9) a need for privacy, 10) independence from culture and the environment, 11) creativity, 12) spontaneity, 13) greater focus on problems than on oneself, 14) acceptance of basic human nature, and 15) not always wanting to conform to others.

In addition to the five basic human needs, there are concepts called deficiency needs (D-needs) and being needs (B-needs). D-needs are needs arising from deficiency and include physiological, safety, self-esteem, and social needs. B-needs are growth needs (being values or metaneeds), namely needs for self-fulfillment. The hierarchy of five basic needs proposed by Maslow is illustrated by Murad, Gultom, and Menanti (2024) in Figure 2.

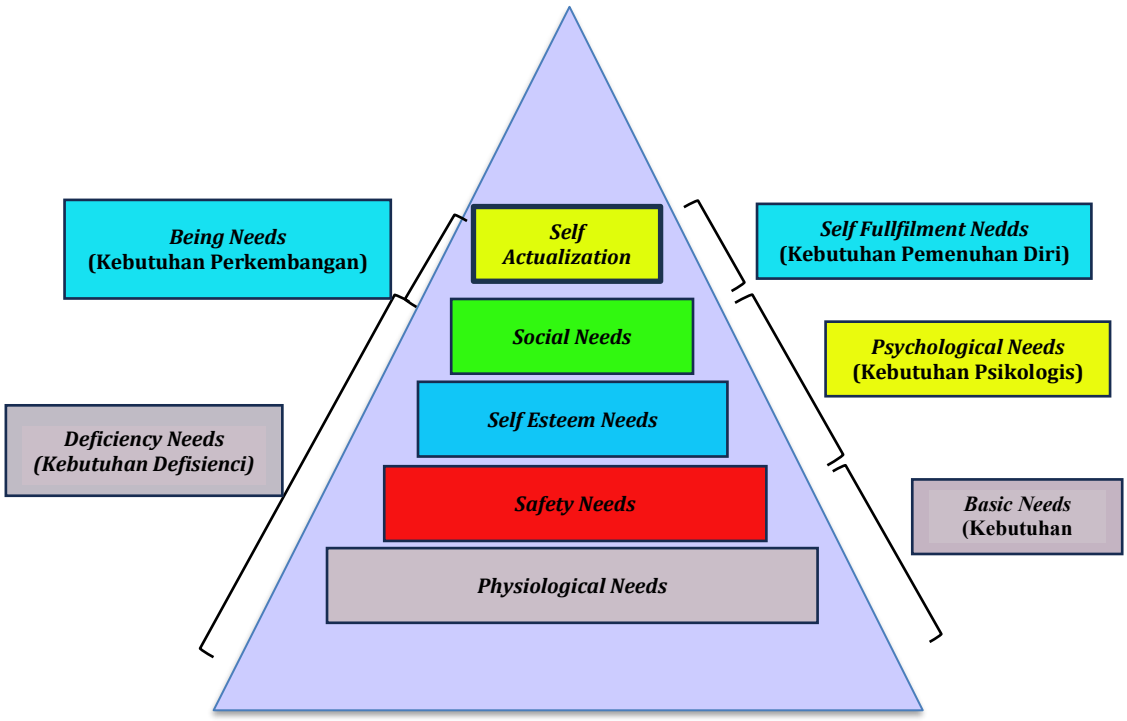


Figure 2. Basic Human Needs

Research Findings on Moral Judgment in Several Locations in Indonesia

Sixteen research findings on moral judgment from several locations in Indonesia are presented in Table 2.

Year	Researcher	Research Title	Research Findings	Type
1982	Setiono	Development of Students' Social Cognition: Effects of the UNPAD Community Service Program on the Coordination of Social Perspectives and Students' Moral Judgment	99% conventional; 1% preconventional; 0% postconventional	Dissertation
1990	Menanti	The Role of Moral Discussion Stimulation in Increasing Students' Moral Judgment	42.86% conventional; 26.78% postconventional; 27.68% A, M, MT	Thesis
1999	Supartini	Relationship Between	2.86% preconventional;	Undergraduate thesis

		Perceptions of Scout Development and Moral Judgment	20% conventional; 37.14% postconventional; 0% A, M	
2003	Menanti	Moral Judgment of High-Achieving and Non-High-Achieving Students at SMUN IV Medan	5.22% preconventional; 32.09% conventional; 32.84% postconventional; 29.85% A, M, MT	Undergraduate thesis
2005	Maryani	Relationship Between Organizational Participation and Moral Judgment among Late Adolescents	4% preconventional; 28% conventional; 40% postconventional; 28% A, M, MT	Undergraduate thesis
2006	Christina Rosito	Relationship Between Religiosity and Moral Judgment among Late Adolescents	32.8% preconventional and conventional; 40.6% postconventional; 26.5% A, M, MT	Undergraduate thesis
2007	Oki, P. S.	Study of the Stages of Moral Judgment among University Students Who Cheat during Examinations	31.66% preconventional and conventional; 36.66% postconventional; 31.68% A, M, MT	Undergraduate thesis
2014	Suhana	The Effect of Group Guidance Services Using Sociodrama Techniques in Increasing Moral Judgment among Students Who Cheat	49.90% preconventional and conventional; 41.60% postconventional; 8.50% A, M, MT	Undergraduate thesis
2016	Menanti & Murad	The Level of Adolescents' Moral Judgment	Moral judgment was predominantly conventional	Journal
2018	Sigiro	The Effect of Social Interaction and Gender Roles on the Moral Judgment of Students at SMA Negeri 12 Medan	72.59% Stage 4; 18.52% Stage 3; 4.44% Stage 5A; 1.48% Stage 6; 2.90% A, M, MT	Thesis

2018	Amanda, M. L.	The Effect of Cognitive Control and Peer Social Interaction on Students' Moral Judgment at SMA Negeri 12 Medan	89.50% conventional; 16.20% Stage 4; 73.30% Stage 3; 5.70% Stage 6; 4.75% A, M	Thesis
2024	Ulfa	Contribution of Peer Interaction to Students' Moral Judgment at SMA Negeri 1 Tanjung Morawa	8% preconventional; 36% conventional; 28% postconventional; 28% mixed type	Undergraduate thesis
2024	Erika	Relationship Between Intellectual Intelligence and Moral Judgment: A Study of Students with Problems at SMP Negeri 27 Medan	18.18% Stage 2; 6.06% Stage 3; 12.12% Stage 4; 6.06% Stage 5A; 21.21% Stage 5B; 3.03% Stage 6	Undergraduate thesis
2024	Ramanda	Relationship Between Conventional-Level Moral Judgment and Academic Cheating among Students at SMA Negeri 1 Tanjung Morawa	8% preconventional; 36% conventional; 28% postconventional; 28% A	Undergraduate thesis
2025	Khaliza	Contribution of Moral Judgment to Verbal Aggressiveness among Grade IX Students at SMP Negeri 1 Binjai	4% preconventional; 89% conventional; 7% postconventional	Undergraduate thesis
2025	Lubis	Correlation Between Conventional-Level Moral Judgment and Academic Procrastination among Students at SMA Negeri 1 Tanjung Morawa	8% preconventional; 36% conventional; 28% postconventional; 28% MT	Undergraduate thesis

Table 2. Research Findings on Moral Judgment among Indonesian Adolescents

Note: A (anti-establishment) refers to moral reasoning that cannot be precisely categorized into a particular stage. M (meaningless) refers to moral reasoning that is not sufficiently strong to be categorized into a particular stage. MT (mixed type) refers to mixed moral reasoning.

A review of the studies in Table 2 shows that most research subjects were at the conventional level, particularly Stages 3 and 4. Meanwhile, according to Kohlberg (in Lickona, 1976) and Hurlock (1980), adolescents are expected to reach the postconventional level.

Analysis of Moral Judgment from the Perspective of Basic Human Needs

Based on the perspectives of experts who have debated the relative contributions of heredity and environment, subsequent views emphasize the interaction between the two factors. Individual achievement of a particular level of moral judgment is therefore determined by both heredity and environmental factors. Lerner (1976), citing Anastasi, stated that heredity and environment must be considered together. The questions of which one—nature or nurture—matters, and how much each contributes, are therefore inappropriate when considered separately. Rather, the two factors interact with one another to shape the individual at a given time. Achievement of a particular stage of moral judgment is influenced by two determining factors: internal or individual factors and external or environmental factors.

The internal or individual factor associated with moral judgment is intelligence. Intelligence is a basic potential for thinking ability, and thinking ability provides a basis for the development of moral judgment. Moral judgment requires intelligence and particular thinking abilities to reach particular levels. For example, postconventional moral judgment requires formal operational thinking, and formal operational thinking presupposes at least average intellectual ability. Innate potential interacts with environmental factors to build and increase moral judgment, particularly through environments that stimulate rich role-taking and cognitive-moral conflict.

In addition to thinking ability, an important internal factor influencing moral judgment is the role of human needs in supporting moral development. Basic needs as proposed by Abraham Maslow (Schultz, 1977) encourage individuals to pay attention to moral issues and become interested in moral thinking. Without needs, attention, and interest in morality, moral issues may pass without significance. Therefore, encouraging individuals to focus their attention and interest on moral thinking in depth is a problem that needs to be addressed in efforts to increase moral judgment.

Mahyudin (in Elmustian et al., 2003) stated that Malays regard thinking as a value in life, but many Malays do not routinely practice this culture of thinking in everyday life. Indonesians include Malay ethnic groups. Each of the five basic needs is related to moral judgment, just as basic needs as a whole are related to moral judgment. This relationship lies in the presence or absence and strength or weakness of needs, as well as the attention and interest directed toward moral issues and moral thinking (moral thinking/moral reasoning/moral judgment).

Each basic need is related to moral judgment as follows:

1) Physiological Needs

Physiological needs are the most basic needs and should be fulfilled before physical or psychological activities such as thinking can be carried out optimally. Their relationship with moral judgment can be illustrated as follows: a student who is extremely hungry because they have not eaten or drunk anything since morning until leaving school at 1:30 p.m. takes a piece of cake from the school canteen without paying and does not tell the canteen owner. The student's moral judgment is influenced by several school friends who also do not have pocket money to buy the cake. The student uses Stage 1 moral judgment because the decision refers to the authority of peers. Another example is a father who steals a customer's wallet at a market to buy medicine for his wife, who has a serious lung illness requiring immediate treatment, pay hospital costs, and provide food for his children. He feels ashamed to borrow money from relatives or neighbors because he has repeatedly failed to repay his debts and believes it would be difficult to borrow

again. In this situation, the father is driven to prioritize humanitarian considerations, which is associated with Stage 5.

2) Safety Needs

Individuals with a strong need for safety usually seek order, stability, and conformity with expectations. In relation to moral judgment, individuals may feel safe and comfortable when making decisions or taking actions based on moral judgment that emphasizes order and stability, corresponding to Stage 4.

3) Love and Belongingness Needs

Consistent with safety needs, love and belongingness needs may lead individuals to use Stage 3 moral judgment when acting or making decisions, with the expectation that their needs to be loved, to love, and to belong to a particular person or group will be fulfilled.

4) Self-Esteem Needs

In Maslow's theory, self-esteem is the need to feel worthy or valued by others. Coopersmith (1967) defined self-esteem as self-evaluation. This self-evaluation is influenced by the attitudes, interactions, appreciation, and acceptance of others toward the individual. Feelings of worth originate from within oneself, whereas feelings of being valued originate from the environment. In relation to moral judgment, the need for self-esteem tends to direct individuals toward Stage 5 moral judgment, in which autonomy—being able to act and make decisions without depending on others—plays an important role.

5) Self-Actualization Needs

Individuals who have reached a high level of achievement generally act for self-fulfillment rather than seeking recognition, praise, or admiration. They focus more on problems than on themselves. Their actions or decisions consider democratic values and principles that can apply to all human beings, are less constrained by culture, and do not require conformity with others. As previously described in the discussion of basic human needs, these characteristics are associated with Stages 5 and 6, within the postconventional level.

CONCLUSION

1) Basic needs play a role in motivating indiv iduals, directing their attention, and generating their interest in moral judgment.

2) Basic needs can direct or influence the use of moral judgment at particular stages according to the type of basic need (physiological needs, safety needs, love and belongingness needs, self-esteem needs, and self-actualization needs).

3) It is important to encourage individuals to become accustomed to thinking deeply about moral judgment.

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