

An Analysis of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in Levon Cade's Character in A Working Man (2025)

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Abstract: This study analyzes the hierarchy of needs reflected in Levon Cade, the main character of A Working Man (2025). The research is grounded in Abraham Maslow's theory of human motivation, which classifies human needs into five levels: physiological needs, safety needs, love and belongingness needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. This study employed a descriptive qualitative method, with the data taken from selected scenes, dialogues, actions, and visual expressions of Levon Cade in the movie. The data were collected through repeated viewing, scene identification, screenshot documentation, and classification based on Maslow's theoretical framework. The findings reveal that all five levels of needs are reflected in Levon Cade's character. A total of 23 data were identified, consisting of 8 data of physiological needs, 5 data of safety needs, 4 data of love and belongingness needs, 4 data of esteem needs, and 2 data of self-actualization needs. The most dominant need is physiological need, showing Levon's effort to maintain basic survival amid conflict and danger. Meanwhile, the fulfillment of safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization needs reflects his struggle to build a stable life, maintain meaningful relationships, gain recognition, and achieve personal fulfillment. This study indicates that Levon Cade's character development represents the dynamic process of fulfilling human needs in challenging social and personal circumstances.

Keywords: hierarchy of needs, Maslow, physiological needs, Levon Cade, A Working Man

INTRODUCTION

Literature is a form of human expression that represents ideas, emotions, imagination, and social experiences through language and artistic construction. It does not only function as entertainment, but also as a medium for conveying moral, cultural, psychological, and social values. Culler (2017) explains that literature is a written product intended to be read and interpreted, while Klarer (2004) states that literary works present human experiences through imaginative and aesthetic forms. In this sense, literature can be understood as a reflection of life because it often portrays human conflicts, desires, struggles, and motivations.

Along with the development of modern media, literary studies are no longer limited to written texts such as poetry, prose, and novels. Film can also be examined as a literary and cultural text because it presents narrative, characterization, conflict, setting, theme, and moral values through visual and auditory elements. Monaco (2009) argues that film is a series of moving images combined with sound to create motion, meaning, and narrative experience. Through its characters and storyline, a film can represent various aspects of human life, including psychological problems, social relationships, emotional conflicts, and the process of fulfilling human needs.

One psychological theory that can be used to analyze human motivation in literary and film characters is Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Maslow (1954) proposes that human needs are arranged in five levels, namely physiological needs, safety needs, love and belongingness needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. Physiological needs refer to basic survival needs such as food, water, rest, and shelter. Safety needs are related to protection, stability, security, and freedom from fear. Love and belongingness needs involve affection, family bonds, friendship, and social relationships. Esteem needs refer to recognition, respect, confidence, and achievement. Meanwhile, self-actualization needs represent

the highest level of human motivation, in which individuals attempt to realize their potential and achieve personal fulfillment.

The hierarchy of needs is relevant to literary and film analysis because fictional characters are often portrayed as individuals who struggle to fulfill their needs in complex situations. Characters may experience physical danger, emotional loss, social pressure, family conflict, or moral responsibility. These conditions influence their actions and decisions throughout the story. Therefore, Maslow's theory can help explain how a character's behavior is motivated by the need to survive, feel secure, build relationships, gain recognition, and achieve self-fulfillment.

A Working Man (2025) is an action thriller film that portrays the life of Levon Cade, an ex-Royal Marine Commando who tries to leave his violent past and live an ordinary life as a construction worker. Levon's life is complicated by his struggle to maintain a stable life, his relationship with his daughter, and his emotional burden from the past. His situation becomes more complex when Jenny, the daughter of the Garcia family, is kidnapped. Although Levon initially wants to avoid violence and preserve his peaceful life, he eventually decides to use his abilities to save Jenny. This conflict makes Levon Cade an interesting character to analyze because his actions reflect various levels of human needs, from basic survival to self-actualization.

Several previous studies have applied Maslow's hierarchy of needs to analyze characters in films. Prasetyo (2023) analyzed the hierarchy of needs and striving for superiority in the movie *500 Days of Summer* and found that the main character's behavior reflects different levels of human motivation. Alvi (2022) examined the hierarchy of needs in the main character of *Soul* and showed that the character fulfills several basic and higher-level needs. Hardiyanti (2022) analyzed Maslow's hierarchy of needs in *Frances Ha* and found that the main character fulfills the five levels of needs despite facing personal obstacles. These studies indicate that Maslow's theory is useful for examining character development and psychological motivation in films.

Although previous studies have discussed Maslow's hierarchy of needs in various films, the analysis of Levon Cade in *A Working Man* (2025) has not been widely explored. This film presents a unique character who experiences tension between his desire for a peaceful life and his responsibility to protect others. Levon Cade is not only portrayed as an action hero, but also as a father, worker, friend, and former soldier who attempts to rebuild his life. Therefore, this study focuses on how the five levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs are reflected in Levon Cade's character.

Based on the background above, this research aims to analyze the hierarchy of needs reflected in Levon Cade as the main character of *A Working Man* (2025). This study is expected to contribute to literary and film studies, particularly in the application of psychological theory to character analysis. By examining Levon Cade through Maslow's hierarchy of needs, this research provides an understanding of how human motivation, emotional struggle, social relationship, and personal fulfillment are represented in a contemporary action thriller film.

RESEARCHMETHOD

This research employed a descriptive qualitative method. A qualitative method is appropriate for analyzing literary and film texts because it allows the researcher to interpret meanings, actions, dialogues, and character behavior in depth. According to Creswell and Creswell (2023), qualitative research is used to explore and understand the meanings individuals or groups give to a social or human problem. Therefore, this method is suitable for this study because the data are not numerical, but are presented in the form of scenes, dialogues, actions, expressions, and visual representations related to the hierarchy of needs experienced by the main character.

The data source of this research was the movie *A Working Man* (2025), released in the United States by Amazon MGM Studios and in the United Kingdom by Warner Bros. Pictures. The movie was released on March 28, 2025, with a duration of approximately one hour and fifty-six minutes. The main focus of this research was Levon Cade, the main character of the movie. The data consisted of selected scenes, dialogues, actions, expressions, and screenshots that represented the five levels of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, namely physiological needs, safety needs, love and belongingness needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs (Maslow, 1954).

The data collection was conducted through several steps. First, the researcher watched *A Working Man* several times to understand the storyline, character development, and conflicts experienced by Levon Cade. Second, the researcher identified scenes and dialogues that were relevant to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Third, the researcher took screenshots of selected scenes and noted the duration of each scene as supporting data. Fourth, the collected data were organized into a table based on the five categories of needs proposed by Maslow.

The data analysis was carried out using a theory-based classification. First, the researcher classified the collected data into five categories of needs based on Maslow's theory. Second, each datum was analyzed by relating the scene, dialogue, action, or expression of Levon Cade to the characteristics of each level of needs. Third, the researcher interpreted how the fulfillment of these needs reflected Levon Cade's motivation, emotional condition, social relationship, and personal development. Finally, the researcher drew conclusions based on the results of the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings and discussion of the hierarchy of needs reflected in Levon Cade, the main character of *A Working Man* (2025). The analysis is based on Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which consists of physiological needs, safety needs, love and belongingness needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. Based on the data analysis, the researcher found that all five levels of needs are represented in Levon Cade's character. The findings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Hierarchy of Needs Found in Levon Cade

No.	Hierarchy of Needs	Data
1	Physiological Needs	8
2	Safety Needs	5
3	Love and Belongingness Needs	4
4	Esteem Needs	4
5	Self-actualization Needs	2
Total		23

Table 1 shows that 23 data were found in *A Working Man* (2025). Physiological needs appear as the most dominant category, with 8 data. Safety needs are found in 5 data, followed by love and belongingness needs and esteem needs, each with 4 data. Meanwhile, self-actualization needs appear in 2 data. These findings indicate that Levon Cade's character is constructed through a dynamic process of fulfilling basic needs, emotional needs, social needs, and higher personal needs. Although Levon is portrayed as a former soldier and an action-oriented character, his motivation is not only driven by violence or physical conflict, but also by his need to survive, protect his family, build meaningful relationships, gain recognition, and achieve personal fulfillment.

Physiological Needs

Physiological needs are the most basic level in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. These needs are related to human physical survival, such as eating, drinking, sleeping, resting, and having shelter. In *A Working Man* (2025), Levon Cade's physiological needs are shown through several scenes that portray his effort to maintain his physical condition despite being involved in dangerous and stressful situations.



Figure 1. Levon Cade Eats Bread While Holding His Enemy Hostage
[Insert Screenshot: Datum 1, Duration 31:22]

Datum 1, which appears at 31:22, shows Levon Cade eating bread while holding his enemy hostage. This scene reflects physiological need because eating is one of the most basic requirements for human survival. Although Levon is in a tense situation, his action of eating indicates that the need for food remains essential even in the middle of conflict. The scene also suggests that Levon must maintain his physical strength to continue his mission. Therefore, the scene represents the fulfillment of physiological needs because Levon satisfies his basic bodily need for food.



Figure 2. Levon Cade Has a Meal with His Daughter and His Friend's Family
[Insert Screenshot: Datum 2, Duration 1:50:07]

Datum 2, which appears at 1:50:07, shows Levon Cade having a meal with his daughter and his friend's family. This scene also represents physiological needs because the act of eating fulfills the basic human need for food. However, this scene has a broader meaning than mere survival. The meal occurs after Levon has passed through conflict and danger, so it also symbolizes the restoration of normal life. Through this scene, Levon is shown as a character who is able to return to a peaceful situation where his basic needs can be fulfilled in the presence of people close to him.

Based on these findings, physiological needs become the most dominant category in Levon Cade's character. The dominance of physiological needs shows that survival is an important aspect of Levon's life. As a construction worker and former soldier, Levon often faces physical demands, danger, and pressure. Therefore, the fulfillment of physiological needs becomes the foundation that enables him to continue his activities and face the conflicts in the movie.

Safety Needs

After physiological needs are fulfilled, the next level is safety needs. Safety needs refer to the need for protection, stability, security, order, and freedom from fear. In Levon Cade's character, safety needs are strongly related to his desire to leave his violent past and build a stable life as an ordinary person. His safety needs are also reflected in his effort to protect his daughter from danger.



Figure 3. Levon Cade States That He Is No Longer the Same Person
[Insert Screenshot: Datum 3, Duration 19:26]

Datum 3, which appears at 19:26, shows Levon saying that he is a different person. He no longer wants to be seen only as a former soldier, but as an ordinary citizen who works in construction. This scene reflects safety needs because Levon tries to distance himself from his violent past and maintain his current stable life. His statement shows that he wants to avoid danger, conflict, and instability. In this context, safety is not only physical protection but also psychological stability. Levon wants to live without fear and does not want to return to the life that once placed him in dangerous situations.



Figure 4. Levon Cade Entrusts His Daughter to His Friend
[Insert Screenshot: Datum 4, Duration 1:22:44]

Datum 4, which appears at 1:22:44, shows Levon entrusting his daughter to his friend and his friend's wife. This action represents safety needs because Levon wants to make sure that his daughter is protected from his enemies. By placing his daughter in a safer environment, Levon can focus on his mission without being overwhelmed by fear for her safety. This scene also shows that Levon's safety needs are closely connected to his role as a father. He does not only seek safety for himself, but also for the person he loves.

The analysis shows that safety needs play an important role in Levon's motivation. His decision to live as a construction worker reflects his desire for a peaceful and stable life. However, when danger threatens people close to him, Levon must temporarily return to his old skills. This creates an internal conflict between his need for safety and his moral responsibility to protect others.

Love and Belongingness Needs

Love and belongingness needs refer to the human need for affection, friendship, family, intimacy, and social connection. In *A Working Man* (2025), Levon Cade's love and belongingness needs are reflected in his relationships with his daughter, his boss, his coworkers, and the Garcia family. These relationships show that Levon is not an isolated action hero, but a person who needs emotional bonds and social acceptance.



Figure 5. Levon Cade Smiles While Talking to His Boss and the Family
[Insert Screenshot: Datum 5, Duration 05:10]

Datum 5, which appears at 05:10, shows Levon smiling freely while talking to his boss and the family. This scene reflects love and belongingness needs because Levon is portrayed as having a close and positive relationship with them. His boss and the family treat him with respect and care, making Levon feel accepted as part of their social circle. The scene indicates that Levon's workplace is not only a place to earn money, but also a space where he experiences belonging and emotional connection.



Figure 6. Levon Cade Meets His Daughter
[Insert Screenshot: Datum 6, Duration 09:38]

Datum 6, which appears at 09:38, shows Levon meeting his daughter. His daughter happily runs to him when she realizes that her father has arrived. This scene clearly represents love and belongingness needs because it shows the emotional bond between father and daughter. Levon's relationship with his daughter becomes one of the most important emotional motivations in the movie. His love for his daughter strengthens his desire to survive, remain responsible, and return safely.

The love and belongingness needs in Levon Cade's character show that his actions are strongly influenced by emotional attachment. His relationship with his daughter and the Garcia family becomes a source of motivation. These relationships humanize Levon's character and show that behind his physical strength, he is also driven by affection, loyalty, and a need for connection.

Esteem Needs

Esteem needs refer to the need for respect, recognition, confidence, achievement, and appreciation from others. In Maslow's hierarchy, esteem can be divided into internal esteem, such as self-confidence and competence, and external esteem, such as recognition and respect from others. In the movie, Levon Cade's esteem needs are reflected in the recognition he receives from his coworkers and former military colleague.



Figure 7. Levon Cade Gives Instructions to His Coworkers
[Insert Screenshot: Datum 7, Duration 04:12]

Datum 7, which appears at 04:12, shows Levon Cade being respected by his coworkers. His coworkers listen attentively to his instructions, indicating that they value his role and competence. This scene reflects esteem needs because Levon receives recognition in his workplace. As a construction worker, Levon is not only physically active but also respected for his leadership, discipline, and work ethic. The recognition from his coworkers shows that Levon has an important position in his social and professional environment.



Figure 8. Levon Cade Receives Recognition from His Former Military Colleague
[Insert Screenshot: Datum 8, Duration 20:59]

Datum 8, which appears at 20:59, shows Levon receiving recognition from his former Royal Marine Commando colleague. Levon still feels guilty because he believes he failed to save his friend completely. However, his friend expresses gratitude and acknowledges Levon's effort. This recognition is important because it helps Levon deal with his guilt. The scene reflects esteem needs because Levon receives appreciation for his ability, courage, and sacrifice. At the same time, the scene also shows internal esteem because Levon begins to feel relief after receiving acknowledgment from someone connected to his past. These findings show that esteem needs are important in Levon's character development. Levon needs recognition not because he seeks praise, but because he carries emotional burden from his past. The respect he receives from coworkers and former colleagues helps restore his self-worth and confidence.

Therefore, esteem needs in this movie are closely related to Levon's process of healing and rebuilding his identity.

Self-actualization Needs

Self-actualization is the highest level in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This need refers to the process of realizing one's potential, achieving personal growth, and finding meaning in life. In Levon Cade's character, self-actualization is reflected in his ability to use his skills, overcome his past, and complete a meaningful mission.



Figure 9. Levon Cade Successfully Saves Jenny
[Insert Screenshot: Datum 9, Duration 1:48:08]

Datum 9, which appears at 1:48:08, shows Levon Cade successfully completing his mission to save Jenny, his boss's daughter. This scene reflects self-actualization because Levon uses his maximum ability to protect someone in danger. His success in saving Jenny shows that he is still capable of using his skills as a former Royal Marine Commando, but this time for a meaningful and moral purpose. By saving Jenny, Levon also confronts his past failure and proves to himself that he can still be useful to others.



Figure 10. Levon Cade Returns to His Daughter After Completing the Mission
[Insert Screenshot: Datum 10, Duration 1:49:08]

Datum 10, which appears at 1:49:08, shows Levon returning to his daughter after successfully rescuing Jenny. He finally fulfills his promise to come back safely. This scene represents self-actualization because Levon achieves personal satisfaction, emotional relief, and moral fulfillment. His success is not only measured by completing the mission, but also by keeping his promise as a father. The happiness and relief shown in this scene indicate that Levon has reached a sense of personal fulfillment.

The self-actualization needs in Levon Cade's character are shown through his ability to transform his painful past into meaningful action. He does not return to violence for revenge or personal pride, but to protect others and fulfill his responsibility. Therefore, Levon's self-actualization is reflected in his courage to use his potential for a higher purpose.

Overall Discussion

The findings show that Levon Cade fulfills all five levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The most dominant category is physiological needs, followed by safety needs, love and belongingness needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. This distribution indicates that Levon's character is strongly shaped by survival and protection, but his development also moves toward emotional connection, recognition, and personal fulfillment.

The hierarchy of needs in Levon Cade does not appear in a strictly linear order. In several scenes, different needs appear at the same time. For example, when Levon eats with his daughter and his friend's

family, the scene can be interpreted as physiological need because it involves eating, but it also contains love and belongingness because it shows family connection. Similarly, when Levon protects his daughter, the scene reflects safety needs, but it is also motivated by love and belongingness. This shows that human needs in film characters can overlap and influence one another.

Levon Cade's character demonstrates that the fulfillment of human needs is closely related to personal conflict and social responsibility. His physiological and safety needs reflect his effort to survive and maintain stability. His love and belongingness needs reflect his emotional attachment to his daughter and the people around him. His esteem needs show his desire to regain recognition and self-worth. Finally, his self-actualization needs reveal his ability to use his potential meaningfully by saving Jenny and returning safely to his daughter.

Thus, *A Working Man* (2025) presents Levon Cade as a character whose actions are not only driven by external conflict, but also by inner motivation. Through Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Levon's character can be understood as a person who struggles to maintain life, protect loved ones, rebuild identity, and achieve personal fulfillment.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis, it can be concluded that Levon Cade, the main character in *A Working Man* (2025), fulfills all five levels of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The findings show that there are 23 data representing the hierarchy of needs in Levon Cade's character. Physiological needs appear as the most dominant category, with 8 data. This indicates that Levon is able to fulfill his basic survival needs, such as eating, drinking, sleeping, and maintaining his physical condition, even though he faces difficult circumstances as a construction worker and former soldier.

Safety needs are found in 5 data. These needs are reflected in Levon's effort to build a more stable and peaceful life after leaving his past as a Royal Marine Commando. His desire to avoid violence, protect his daughter, and maintain a secure environment shows that safety becomes an important motivation in his life. Love and belongingness needs are found in 4 data. These needs are shown through Levon's relationships with his daughter, his boss, his coworkers, and the Garcia family. His emotional bond with his daughter and his close relationship with the people around him indicate that Levon needs affection, acceptance, and social connection.

Esteem needs are also found in 4 data. Levon receives respect and recognition from his coworkers and former military colleague. This recognition helps him maintain his self-worth and confidence, especially because he still carries emotional burden from his past. Meanwhile, self-actualization needs are found in 2 data. These needs are reflected in Levon's success in saving Jenny and fulfilling his promise to return safely to his daughter. Through this achievement, Levon is able to use his abilities meaningfully, overcome his past guilt, and achieve personal fulfillment.

Overall, Levon Cade's character shows that the fulfillment of human needs does not always occur in a fixed or linear order. Some needs appear simultaneously and influence one another. His actions are not only driven by physical survival, but also by the need for safety, love, recognition, and personal meaning. Therefore, *A Working Man* (2025) portrays Levon Cade as a character whose motivation and development can be understood through Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

For future researchers, it is suggested to analyze the hierarchy of needs using different data sources, such as novels, short stories, dramas, or other films. Future studies may also compare more than one character to obtain a broader understanding of how human needs are represented in literary or cinematic works. In addition, future researchers can combine Maslow's theory with other psychological theories to produce a deeper analysis of character motivation and development.

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