

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Motivation is the psychological stimulus that individuals possess to attain life's fulfilment, as it alleviates physical discomfort and enhances pleasurable experiences. Maslow posits that people always desire something, and motivation is crucial for this. It encompasses physiological needs for sustenance, rest, and thermal comfort. It can be based on a hierarchy of needs, emphasising growth and full potential, reflecting the constructive portrayal of human nature (1970:24).

Psychology defines motivation as a fundamental driving force that propels individuals towards their future goals, providing insight into crucial aspects of human behavior (Cherry, 2023:5). According to Dar, there is a close relationship between psychology and literature, as both fields aim to understand observable behaviors and cognitive processes of individuals (2022:290). Wellek and Warren explain that the psychology of literature examines characters' personalities, creative works, psychological archetypes, and their impact on readers (1956:81). Therefore, the psychological aspects of literary characters can be examined through Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This theory includes needs for physiological well-being, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualisation, all of which are reflected in literary works. A notable example is the children's novel *The Magician's Elephant* by Kate DiCamillo.

As literary creations, novels often explore themes relevant to life. Characters in novels seek fulfilment in ways that mirror real-life individuals (Ronie & Hellystia, 2019:146). *The Magician's Elephant* presents a narrative that reflects aspects of human needs through the story of Peter Augustus Duchene, an orphan who is poor and cared for by a somewhat indifferent soldier named Vilna. The narrative commences as Peter meets a fortuneteller in the city of Baltese, who discloses that his younger sister, named Adele, is still alive and directs him to look for an elephant to locate her. Initially sceptical due to his guardian insisting that his sister is dead, Peter's journey begins with the sudden appearance of the elephant in Baltese. The book explores themes of hope, belonging, and fulfilment as Peter faces challenges in meeting his needs. Ultimately, despite these obstacles, he achieves self-actualisation by reuniting with his sister and staying true to himself.

Kate DiCamillo's novel, *The Magician's Elephant*, is worthy of further analysis due to Peter's compelling journey in his quest to reunite with his sister. It is interesting to examine his determined efforts to fulfil his fundamental human needs despite the challenges he faces, ultimately leading to his highest desire to reunite with his lost sister. Therefore, this thesis intends to investigate the main character's journey psychologically through the lens of Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. The analysis will also delve into the interconnected intrinsic components, including characterisations, conflict, and setting, to comprehensively understand the narrative framework.

1.2 Research Problems

Given the study's context, the researcher aims to tackle the subsequent research problems:

1. How does the main character fulfil his physiological needs in Kate DiCamillo's *The Magician's Elephant*?
2. How does the main character fulfil his safety needs in Kate DiCamillo's *The Magician's Elephant*?
3. How does the main character fulfil his love and belonging needs in Kate DiCamillo's *The Magician's Elephant*?
4. How does the main character fulfil his esteem needs in Kate DiCamillo's *The Magician's Elephant*?
5. How does the main character fulfil his self-actualisation needs in Kate DiCamillo's *The Magician's Elephant*?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The research attempts to pinpoint the problem and achieve the following objectives:

1. To explain how the main character meets his physiological needs in Kate DiCamillo's *The Magician's Elephant*.
2. To explain how the main character meets his safety needs in Kate DiCamillo's *The Magician's Elephant*.
3. To explain how the main character meets his love and belonging needs in Kate DiCamillo's *The Magician's Elephant*.

4. To explain how the main character meets his esteem needs in Kate DiCamillo's *The Magician's Elephant*.
5. To explain how the main character meets his self-actualisation needs in Kate DiCamillo's *The Magician's Elephant*.

4.4 Previous Study

The writer conducted a review of studies on the novel *The Magician's Elephant* by Kate DiCamillo to maintain academic integrity and build upon existing academic knowledge.

The first previous study is an article written by Sarah Miller. The article was published in 2023, entitled "*The Magician's Elephant* by Kate DiCamillo" which was published on a platform called "Can We Read?". This article highlights the novel's tone and Peter's determination and hope. While this article focuses on narrative and theme, it lacks psychological analysis.

The second previous study of the novel *The Magician's Elephant* was conducted by Syafira Hardina Chairani, Masulah Masulah, and Ari Setyorini from Muhammadiyah University of Surabaya and published in 2019. This article entitled "Relationship Between Human and Animal in Kate DiCamillo's *The Magician's Elephant*" examines the dynamic between animal and human beings in Kate DiCamillo's novel *The Magician's Elephant*. This shows that one of nature's most enduring symbols is the elephant, but it is mistreated by mankind. The text is anthropocentric, emphasising human worth over nature.

The third previous study on this book was conducted by Rachma Kusumaputri, entitled "Environmental Awareness in Kate DiCamillo's *The*

Magician's Elephant”, published in 2017 from Airlangga University. In her thesis, she employs ecocriticism, revealing a deficiency in human comprehension regarding their impact on life and emphasising the importance of fostering awareness and aligning with nature through children's literature, specifically *The Magician's Elephant*, as a medium to spread environmental consciousness and advocate for sustainability in human existence. Therefore, both Chairani and Kususmaputri's studies utilize ecocriticism, unlike the current research, which focuses on psychological aspects rather than environmental ones.

The fourth previous study was written by Catherine Posey and published in 2014 in the Journal of International Children's Literature, entitled “Rebellion as Spiritual Activity in *The Magician's Elephant*”. This paper analyses the impact of orphan characters in modern literature, specifically focusing on how such acts might foster spirituality through authentic connections and interactions with others. To support her analysis, Posey analyses the spirituality and rebellion of the characters using characterisation. Nevertheless, this study approach is more about sociology than psychology.

The fifth previous study of the novel is entitled "The Magician's Elephant" by Igor Silva from Hanes Magnet School, published in 2014. In the article, Silva analyses the book using intrinsic elements, focusing on the characters' characters, especially Vilna Lutz and Peter. Silva also explains the themes present in the story. However, Silva's study does not include an extrinsic analysis, which is the focus of the current research.

The sixth previous study is a brief article by Terre Sychterz, published in 2010 from Kutztown University, entitled "*The Magician's Elephant: Book Reviews*". The article summarises the plot, highlighting the novel's themes, and focusing on the story's appeal and magical elements without offering in-depth analysis. In addition, the seventh previous study is by Adam Gopnik, published in 2009 by The New York Times, entitled "When Elephants Dance". This article highlights the novel's lyrical, allegorical style and emotional depth and focuses on literary qualities rather than character analysis. In contrast, the current study focuses on exploring the character's journey through intrinsic and extrinsic elements.

The eighth previous study is an article by Jeannette Hulick entitled "*The Magician's Elephant (review)*" which was published in 2009 by Johns Hopkins University Press. This article focuses on the whimsical tone, pacing, and illustrations in *The Magician's Elephant* and highlights about reader's experience. In contrast, the current study focuses on Peter as the main character, using a psychological approach, specifically Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, to explore Peter's inner growth and motivation throughout the story.

The ninth previous study was conducted by Donna Cardon and published in 2009 by the Brigham Young University journal, entitled "The Magician's Elephant". The article highlights how the novel relies on emotional symbolism and dreamlike storytelling rather than realism. While it acknowledges Peter's compassion and courage, the analysis focuses on literary elements and themes.

Furthermore, the last previous study is a 2009 interview article conducted by Rocco Staino from the *School Library Journal*, entitled “Trunk-Kated: An Interview with Kate DiCamillo”. The article focuses on the origins and themes of *The Magician’s Elephant*, such as hope and community. While insightful on authorial intent, it does not analyse character development. In contrast, the current study uses Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs to examine Peter’s psychological growth and motivations throughout the story, while Cardon and Rocco’s articles do not really focus on extrinsic elements.

To conclude, the current study expands upon prior investigations while simultaneously offering novel viewpoints. While acknowledging the valuable insights from previous studies, it differentiates itself by utilising Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs theory to provide a more comprehensive analysis of how Peter can achieve self-actualisation despite his background and applying a psychological approach. Furthermore, this investigation examines the intrinsic theories to gain a thorough understanding of the narrative framework. In contrast, previous studies did not explore these aspects of this work of literature.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This thesis examines the progression of the main character in Kate DiCamillo’s *The Magician’s Elephant* through Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. The writer goes over the fundamental components, encompassing the characters and characterisations, conflicts, and settings. The extrinsic factor is limited within the psychological framework of the hierarchy of needs by Maslow,

encompassing physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualisation needs.

1.6 Writing Organisation

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

This part of the thesis encompasses the background of the study, research problems, objectives of the study, previous studies, and the scope of the study.

CHAPTER II: THEORY AND METHODS

This chapter of the thesis outlines the theory and research methods employed in the study. The theoretical framework section defines the intrinsic and extrinsic components used by the writer in the thesis writing process, as well as the research methods utilised in composing the thesis.

CHAPTER III: ANALYSIS

This chapter examines character, conflict, and setting as intrinsic elements and defines Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory breaks down five levels of human needs, including physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualisation, in the novel.

CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSION

This chapter presents a conclusion regarding the comprehensive study undertaken by the writer.

REFERENCES