

# The Influence of a Positive Environment on Students' Personal Growth According to a Humanistic Perspective

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## Abstract

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This study explores the influence of a positive environment on students' personal growth from a humanistic counseling perspective. As individuals in early adulthood, students must not only achieve academic success but also develop self-concept, psychological well-being, and learning readiness. A safe, supportive, and humane learning environment is crucial in this developmental process. Using a qualitative approach with a systematic literature review method, the research analyzes relevant national and international journals, books, and articles related to positive environments, self-concept, psychological well-being, and the humanistic theories of Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow. Data were analyzed descriptively through narrative synthesis to identify relationships among these concepts. The findings indicate that a positive environment significantly contributes to a healthy self-concept, improved psychological well-being, and enhanced learning motivation. The humanistic view highlights empathy, unconditional acceptance, and the fulfillment of needs leading to self-actualization as essential for students' growth. Integrating humanistic principles into education and counseling is thus vital to fostering holistic student development.

## 1. Introduction

Education is essential to the life of every individual and group. Education is a life process that allows us to thrive and survive. Educated people will determine what they want to achieve. One of the factors that can determine the success of students in education is learning readiness. Students who are ready to learn will pay attention and try to remember what the teacher teaches, so that they can achieve their learning goals and achieve good results.

Education and teaching are efforts to achieve goals that are progressively aimed at improving behavior so that the student becomes mature. The change shows the steps that must be passed. The process of education and teaching is the main step needed to achieve this goal. Teaching is a process that aims to help students live their lives, by helping them maximize their potential in accordance with the developmental goals that learners must go through. This developmental task includes the need to survive as an individual, as a social being, and as a creature created by the creator. Students are in the stage of early adult development which is characterized by the search for identity, increased independence, and the development of academic and non-academic potential. The humanistic psychological perspective developed by figures such as Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers emphasizes that each individual has an innate potential to develop optimally. However, this potential can only be realized if the individual is in a positive environment.

Students are individuals who are in a period of development towards maturity. This period not only demands academic achievements, but also the development of self-worth, and the meaning of life. Humanistic psychology emphasizes optimal self-growth and development, and this is influenced by the environment in which it is located. Most counseling approaches in college today are still reactive and short-term. Its primary focus is often centered on solving urgent problems, such as stress management. Another service is an academic adaptation strategy for new students who find it difficult. In fact, the root of the problem of many cases lies in more fundamental things. The fundamental issue is the formation of students' identities that are not yet solid and mature.

This is where the role of humanistic approaches, such as those developed by Carl Rogers, becomes particularly relevant. Humanistic counseling theory emphasizes the importance of self-actualization, empathy, and unconditional acceptance. This is the foundation for an effective and empowering counseling relationship. Through this approach, students can feel heard, understood, and fully empowered. This process allows them to know and accept themselves more fully. However, until now, it is still rare to find a comprehensive and integrated literature review. The study should unite self-concept, psychological well-being, and humanistic counseling in one frame of thinking. Most of the research that exists tends to be quantitative or experimental only. As a result, the research does not touch the philosophical and theoretical dimensions in depth. In fact, a theoretical approach is needed to strengthen the foundation of counseling practice in the field.

According to Carl Rogers, a positive environment is one that provides empathy, authenticity, and unconditional acceptance that allows a person to develop psychologically. This is the opinion of Abraham Maslow who states that the need for self-actualization can be met only by a positive or supportive environment (Fauzul'Adziima, 2021). In the university environment, students are greatly influenced by their environment. Such as social interaction, lecturer teaching, and support from family and peers. This research aims to analyze the extent to which an environment affects a person's personal growth.

Learning ability certainly requires self-readiness to face a success in the learning process. A person can only be said to learn something if there is a readiness to learn something in him. Because without the readiness in a person, both a lecturer and a student, of course, will not be able to achieve the goals of the learning process. Learning readiness also has a willingness for students to carry out learning activities first before studying on campus, this readiness certainly includes the ability to self-determination in circumstances where there will be a series or movement that includes physical and spiritual (Majid et al., 2023).

## 2. Methods

This study uses a systematic literature study method to examine the relationship between self-concept and students' psychological well-being from the perspective of humanistic counseling. This method was chosen for its ability to thoroughly trace, unify, and analyze various results of previous research. Therefore, a systematic literature study allows researchers to gain a critical, in-depth, and thorough understanding of a subject based on relevant literature. This research uses a qualitative methodology centered on narrative synthesis. This approach is particularly suitable for literature studies where the goal is to explore a variety of theories, models, and practices in a variety of contexts. This method allows researchers to find the main themes, patterns, and relationships between the underlying concepts of the literature (Fitri & Kushendar, 2021).

## 3. Results and Discussion

The environment has an important role in shaping an individual's personality. For students, a positive lecture environment can be a supporting factor in personal growth, both academically and non-academically. According to a humanistic perspective, every individual has the potential to develop and achieve self-actualization when they are under supportive conditions, such as unconditional acceptance, positive rewards, and opportunities for expression.

The atmosphere of the learning environment that is created depends on how the student can cope and control himself while in his learning environment. The learning environment by experts is often referred to as an educational environment. The condition of this learning environment greatly determines the smooth learning process, such as physical conditions, socio-cultural or community environment, and school environment. If the learning environment conditions are very supportive, then students will be more enthusiastic in the learning process.

The learning environment plays a very important role in creating student passion and socially has a great influence on the learning process. The learning environment can increase student activity and learning effectiveness. The learning environment not only directly affects the high and low learning outcomes, the learning environment will also touch the cognitive or personal

realm of students. In the teaching and learning process, the environment is an influential learning resource in the success of the learning process and the improvement of child development. A place where learning activities take place that have an external influence on the sustainability of the activity. The environment that is a source of learning has an influence on the learning process.

When in the classroom, it turns out that there is a gap between students who are smart and students who are lazy in learning activities. In the classroom there are different groups of students, for example in terms of socializing with friends. There are groups of students who dominate the classroom with a poor influence in terms of learning activities. The gap that occurs is in the work and collection of assignments given by lecturers, some students do and even collect assignments on time while others do work but often walk around or chat with their friends so that assignments are not completed and are not collected on time. Those who associate with a lazy group are likely to be lazy also depending on how the student can control their lazy ego, on the other hand, those who associate with a diligent group are likely to be carried away as well (Damanik & Irawan, 2021).

### **3.1. Theory Humanities Carl Rogers**

His full name is Carl Ransom Rogers, he was born in Oak Park on January 8, 1902. He lived in a fundamentalist Protestant family. He moved to farming at the age of 12 because he loved farming and went to the University of Wisconsin to major in agriculture. He entered Union Theological Seminary in the Big Apple after graduating in 1924 and worked as a pastor in a small church. After graduation, he went to Teachers College at Columbia University. In 1928, he earned his M.A. and in 1931, he earned his Ph.D. He became involved in pediatric research while completing his degree (Fadli, 2021). Rogers worked in the Department of Child Studies of the Organization for the Prevention of Violence against Children in Rochester, N.Y. in 1931. In the next time, he was busy helping children who were experiencing psychological problems. He was offered a professorship in the psychology faculty at Ohio State University in 1939 after publishing an article entitled "The Clinical Treatment of the Problem Child".

To develop his thoughts on psychiatry, Rogers moved to the University of Wisconsin in 1957. He became a professor at Ohio State University after earning his doctorate. Rogers

developed client-centered psychotherapy after moving from a clinical setting to an academic setting. Here, he prefers to use the term student when talking to the person who is consulting rather than the patient. In addition, he wrote the book *On Becoming a Person*, which was published in 1961.

According to Rogers, therapists' opinions and assessment methods are not important factors in treating clients. In 1964, Rogers moved to California because he was disappointed that he couldn't combine psychiatry with psychologists. He joined the Western Behavioral Science Institute. Rogers died on February 4, 1987. Rogers' theory does not fall into the category of holistic theory, but the humanist nature inherent in it makes it unique (Alindra & Amin, 2021). Carl Rogers, a humanistic psychologist, had an impact on his education and practice. In his much-loved book, *Freedom to Learn* and *Freedom to Learn for the 80s*, he offers advice to teachers on how best to conduct more human, more personalized, and meaningful learning and teaching.

Rogers argues that everyone is born with the desire to pursue what they want and behave according to their own personality. Rogers, who also works as a psychotherapist, created individual-centered therapy. To help the process of improving his condition, this approach does not assess or give direction. Instead, he asked the client to explain his identity (Fadli, 2021). Rogers, a humanistic psychologist, emphasizes that helping people overcome their life challenges requires a respectful and non-judgmental attitude. Rogers argues that students should not be forced to learn; instead, students should be allowed to study independently; The hope is that students will have the ability to make their own decisions and take responsibility for the decisions they make.

The learning process, according to Rogers, is to help students to achieve self-realization, which is in accordance with the basic abilities and uniqueness of students. Rogers also mentioned that the learning process is greatly influenced by the meaning of learning. When learning is considered to be in accordance with the needs and goals of the student, it is called significant learning. Rogers also states that everyone has a natural ability to learn. Therefore, there is a desire to learn. This can be seen in the deep curiosity shown by children as they research their environment and seek to discover and understand what they see. Rogers' humanistic theory says

that humans have tremendous potential to evolve, which makes them more optimistic and optimistic about humans. The basis of this theory fits the general definition of humanism, which is defined as a doctrine, attitude, and way of life that emphasizes human values, including honor, self-esteem, and the ability to realize oneself for a specific purpose. In the end, this concept of humanism will be associated with humane learning (Armedyatama, 2021).

Rogers distinguishes cognitive learning from experiential learning. Experiential learning aims to meet students' needs and wants. The quality of experiential learning includes student involvement, initiative, self-evaluation, and impact on students (Alindra & Amin, 2021). Lecture period is a very important stage of growth in a person's life. College students are going through a transition period from adolescence to adulthood, where they learn social and emotional skills, as well as independence and self-identity. However, not all students can establish good social relationships in the field. Many of them have difficulty communicating well, feel awkward when interacting with others, and even have a tendency to stay away from social environments. Academic pressure, lack of emotional support from the environment, previous negative experiences, or lack of confidence are some examples of this phenomenon.

The humanistic approach especially Carl Rogers' theory emphasizes how important relationships are based on unconditional acceptance, empathy, and openness to build good interpersonal relationships and support personal growth. One of the main principles held by Rogers is empathy, which is defined as the ability to comprehensively and without prejudice the experiences and feelings of others. Students who are highly empathetic tend to have an easier time understanding and appreciate differences and are better able to forge more peaceful relationships. Unconditional acceptance, on the other hand, means accepting others as they are without prejudice or conditions. This is important for creating a safe emotional and social environment, especially in a diverse campus environment.

### **3.2. Theory Humanities Abraham Maslow**

Abraham Maslow, who was born in New York in 1908, is better known as the person who built the theory of self-actualization. He died in 1970 in California, United States. Maslow was a

smart man. He told about his childhood as a shy but loved to read books. However, Maslow didn't like himself personally for a while. According to Howard S. Friedman and Moiriam W, he was a father of popular humanistic psychology who encouraged positive social change and realized its potential. Maslow lived at a time when many new schools of psychology and perspectives emerged as disciplines. In 1954, Abraham Maslow published the book *Motivation and Personality*, which offered a new understanding of the concept of human personality. This book relies fundamentally on classical psychology, not on opposing or creating new psychology. According to Abraham Maslow, the goal is to increase the understanding of the human personality and reach higher levels of human essence.

Abraham Maslow is also known as an American psychologist who built the theory of human psychology. Abraham Maslow's most famous theory is the hierarchy of needs. Everyone has the same needs, regardless of different behaviors, physicals, or attitudes. According to Maslow's theory of hierarchy, everyone is motivated to meet different levels of needs, from the most basic to the highest. This level forms a pyramid of needs.

Abraham Maslow's theory says that everyone will be driven by a hierarchy of needs, which starts with the most basic needs such as love, security, and physiological needs. Omodan and Abejide state that self-actualization can only be achieved after meeting the level of self-esteem needs, which consist of self-esteem needs, physiological needs, love and belongings, and self-actualization. Despite the fact that the five levels of the hierarchy may not always be perfectly fulfilled, each individual will strive to achieve them. In education, Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory helps us understand that students' levels of fulfillment can affect their motivation to learn (Rahmawati & Herviyanti, 2023).

Abraham Maslow stated that a person's behavior is basically aimed at meeting needs that are hierarchical. Abraham Maslow was one of the pioneers of the humanistic school. Maslow believed that humans move to understand and accept themselves as much as possible. A very well-known theory is Maslow's hierarchy theory of needs. Maslow explained that humans are motivated to fulfill their life needs. These needs are tiered from the lowest to the highest (self-actualization).



According to a humanistic perspective, the potential of students in the process of growth and development must have the freedom to choose their own path of life. On the other hand, the prospective perspective says that the potential of students in the process of growth and development must have the freedom to choose their own life path. According to humanism, students have the freedom to set their own life goals. Learners are educated to take responsibility for their own lives and those around them (Armedyatama, 2021).

Abraham Maslow's theory is very relevant for the study of student learning motivation in the transition age phase from adolescence to adulthood because it is able to provide a comprehensive and systematic picture of the hierarchy of human needs, from basic needs to self-actualization needs. This is because students are not only trying to meet their physical needs, but also social needs, rewards, and self-actualization. Maslow emphasized that the motivation to meet higher needs arises from the fulfillment of lower level needs. This includes a desire to learn and active involvement in academic and non-academic activities. Maslow's theory is very different from other theories of motivation because it sees the individual as a whole consisting of biological, psychological, and social elements. In addition, this theory provides clear guidelines for educators to analyze and create learning strategies that emphasize the academic aspect while also considering the psychological and basic needs of female students.

From a conceptual perspective, there are various ways for Islamic counseling guidance students to meet their basic needs. Some work part-time, ask their parents for help, and others use the help of others to meet their needs. If the needs of students are not met, students will feel weak and not concentrate when attending lectures. They will also experience an empty stomach due to waking up late so they don't have time for breakfast, and they will become unconcentrated during exams, resulting in a decrease in GPA.

Abraham Maslow's theory is reviewed to determine how to meet the basic needs of students in Islamic counseling guidance. This theory suggests that meeting the physiological needs of students is more important than meeting other needs. Parents, close friends, and friends provide a sense of security to students. It is very similar to the affection that students receive from their

parents, who give attention and meet all their needs. In addition, some students receive love from close friends and people they know. Talking politely with others, buying good clothes, and improving academic achievement are ways students gain self-esteem. Some actualize themselves by joining a group, and some beautify themselves (Muhibbin, 2024).

## 4. Discussion

A positive environment is a social, emotional, and academic condition that provides support, security, and opportunities for individuals to thrive. In the world of education, this environment is created through a supportive learning atmosphere, adequate availability of resources, and constructive interaction between students, teachers, and fellow students. A positive environment helps students feel comfortable, valued, and motivated to actively engage in the learning process as well as achieve their academic goals. In addition, this environment encourages healthy relationships, supported by adequate facilities and effective classroom management. Thus, a positive environment plays an important role in fostering active learning, mutual respect, and fair assessment, which ultimately supports students' overall academic and social development.

Humanist education is an educational approach that emphasizes the independence, creativity, and uniqueness of each individual. In this view, a person's behavior is influenced by the way they perceive themselves and their surroundings. Humanist education upholds human dignity and values, viewing humans as creatures created by God who have innate nature and potential. Therefore, the educational process is not carried out through coercion, but through guidance and encouragement that is in harmony with the natural conditions and abilities of students, so as to be able to support their physical and mental development optimally.

In Indonesia, the concept of learning that is in line with humanist values is learning that gives freedom to students in the learning process. This approach aims to create a safe, comfortable, and enjoyable learning environment, without excessive pressure or demands. Thus, students have the opportunity to develop according to their interests, talents, and potential, while still maintaining

their natural abilities without being forced to master areas of knowledge that do not match their interests (Husnaini et al., 2024).

Learning is a process that takes place in stages, so teachers need to prepare learning materials well before teaching. The preparation of learning should be carried out systematically, starting from simple to more complex material, from concrete to abstract, and from already known knowledge to unknown, so that students can understand the material more easily. In higher education, students face various challenges, such as balancing academic and personal life demands, differences in students' backgrounds and characters, and readiness to face scientific and technological developments. Therefore, students need to have time management skills, expand their horizons, and take advantage of flexible learning. On the other hand, universities are also required to be adaptive and innovative in order to be able to support student development and face the changing times (Santoso, 2023).

Based on this, effective education must prioritize a humanist approach and a positive learning environment, because this helps students feel safe, valued, and motivated to grow. The learning process should be carried out gradually and systematically, adjusted to the abilities, interests, and potential of each individual, not through coercion. In addition, students in higher education need to be able to manage time, develop insights, and adjust to the development of science and technology, while universities must be institutions that are adaptive, innovative, and support the academic and social growth of students. Thus, education focuses not only on material mastery, but also on character building, creativity, and the ability to face life's challenges.

## **5. Conclusion**

Based on the results of the discussion, it can be concluded that a positive environment has a significant role in supporting students' personal growth. A safe, supportive, and respectful environment that respects the existence of individuals can help students develop a healthy self-concept, improve psychological well-being, and strengthen learning readiness to face academic and social demands in higher education. From a humanistic perspective, the theories of Carl Rogers

and Abraham Maslow affirm that students' personal growth can only be achieved optimally if psychological and basic needs are met through empathy, unconditional acceptance, and adequate environmental support. Therefore, higher education needs to integrate a humanistic approach in learning practices and counseling services so that the educational process is not only oriented to academic achievement, but also to the development of students' personalities and self-actualization as a whole.

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