

## An Analysis of the Psychological Needs of Oda Nobunaga in The Legend and Butterfly Using Henry Murray's Theory

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**Abstract.** This study aims to analyze the psychological needs of Nobunaga in the film *The Legend and Butterfly*, directed by Keishi Otomo, using Henry Murray's personology theory. The research focuses on identifying the dominant needs reflected in Nobunaga's actions, dialogues, and character development. The method used in this study is descriptive qualitative. The data were collected by repeatedly watching the film, identifying relevant scenes, and classifying Nobunaga's behavior based on Murray's twenty categories of needs. The findings reveal six dominant needs: achievement, affiliation, defendance, dominance, nurturance, and rejection. The analysis shows that Nobunaga evolves from an impulsive and arrogant young ruler into a more controlled and determined leader. His behavior is influenced not only by internal drives but also by external social pressures such as political conflict and emotional relationships. The interaction between internal needs and external social pressures forms the foundation of Nobunaga's personality and decision-making process. This study confirms that Murray's theory effectively explains the psychological complexity of Nobunaga's character in the film.

**Keywords:** character analysis; henry murray; nobunaga; psychological needs; the legend and butterfly

### RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Literature is often regarded as a reflection of social life as well as a symbol of the progress of civilization because it continuously develops in accordance with socio-cultural dynamics. As a form of creative expression, literature does not merely emerge from imagination but is also rooted in the realities of everyday life (Istikawati et al., 2024). In addition, (Miller, 2011) explains that changes in media have greatly influenced the development of literature because the transition to new media is inevitable, and the role of printed literature has gradually been replaced by television, radio, and cinema. According to (Fatimah & Puspitasari, 2024), literary works are divided into two categories: fiction and nonfiction. Both forms essentially provide aesthetic experiences for readers or audiences, whether in the form of entertainment, intellectual satisfaction, or inner happiness. In the context of fictional works, one form that has developed rapidly in the modern era is film, which is now considered part of modern literary works because it contains narrative elements.

According to Effendi in (Daniswara et al., 2023), film is an audiovisual communication medium that functions to convey messages to a group of audiences gathered in a particular place. The integration of these various elements makes film an effective medium for storytelling. This is in line with the opinion of (Jing, 2023), who states that films can present a deep narrative experience through the combination of visual elements, sound, and performance. Films can also be classified into four types: fiction films, animated films, experimental films, and documentary films (Rikarno, 2019). In this context, historical fiction films often present complex character development enriched with internal conflicts.

In literary psychology studies, characters in fictional works can be analyzed through a psychological approach that highlights the dynamics of human personality. The psychoanalytic approach views human behavior as being influenced by both conscious and unconscious drives that shape the way individuals think and act (Ardiansyah et al., 2022). One historical fiction film that is interesting to analyze is *The Legend and Butterfly* (Otomo, 2023), directed by Keishi Otomo. The film tells the life

journey of Nobunaga, the son of Nobuhide, who was married to Nohime, the daughter of the Saito clan, for political purposes. Although the marriage was initially political in nature, the relationship between Nobunaga and Nohime gradually developed into a strong emotional bond. After the death of Nobuhide, Nobunaga was appointed as the succeeding daimyo of the Oda clan. In the early period of his leadership, Nobunaga was known as reckless and was nicknamed the Fool of Owari, however, he gradually demonstrated a strong determination to unify Japan. Nohime's support also played a role in the development of Nobunaga's mentality and leadership until he was eventually recognized by the Emperor.

Observing Nobunaga's psychological development that led him to achieve various military successes, the researcher is interested in examining the psychological needs that emerge in Nobunaga's character. Therefore, this study employs Henry A. Murray's personality theory to reveal the dynamics of these needs as reflected in the film *The Legend and Butterfly* (Otomo, 2023).

(Murray, 1938) explains that human behavior is influenced by various basic needs. The theory of needs is considered important in psychological studies because human personality is shaped by dynamic psychological drives. Needs are understood as internal energies that motivate individuals to achieve certain goals. Furthermore, Murray also introduced the concept of press, namely external pressures from the environment that can influence the emergence of certain needs. Thus, human behavior is the result of the interaction between internal needs and external pressures (Alwisol, 2018). The film follows Nobunaga's journey from being labeled the Fool of Owari to eventually being recognized by the Emperor. Based on the results of the analysis, it is found that there are six dominant needs within Nobunaga: achievement, affiliation, defendance, dominance, nurturance, and rejection.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In contrast to a previous study conducted by (Zadira & Rudianto, 2022) entitled *Warm Bodies: Psychogenic Needs of Affection in the Novel Warm Bodies by Isaac Marion: A Psychological Approach*, the study applied the theory of Henry Murray to analyze the psychological needs of the main character in a modern setting depicted through post-apocalyptic conditions. The results of the study revealed five dominant needs in the character R: affiliation, rejection, succorance, nurturance, and play, which illustrate the character's struggle to fulfill the need for affection and social relationships amid chaotic world conditions.

Meanwhile, this study uses the film *The Legend and Butterfly* as its object, which is set in the Sengoku period or the Warring States era, with the use of a classical-style Japanese language. Unlike the modern context in the previous study, this historical setting reflects social conditions influenced by values of honor and social pressure. Therefore, the theory of Henry Murray is used to understand the psychological drives and needs of Oda Nobunaga who lived amid warfare and power conflicts.

Although the theory used in this study is the same as that employed in the previous research, namely Henry Murray's Personology theory, the author considers this study necessary because there has been no previous research that analyzes the film *The Legend and Butterfly* from the psychological perspective of its main character.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method. This method focuses on collecting data in the form of words, images, and documents rather than numbers, so that each piece of data is considered to have the potential to become an important element in understanding the research object (Moleong, 2004). This method is chosen because the research attempts to understand the meaning behind the behavior and psychological needs of the character in depth. The analysis of needs based on the theory of Henry Murray requires an understanding of the context of scenes, dialogues, expressions, and

emotional dynamics, which can only be explained through a qualitative approach that is exploratory and interpretative in nature. The presentation of the research findings is supported by quotations to strengthen the description and provide a clear illustration of the research object. The qualitative approach also emphasizes exploration and the discovery of meaning in understanding the phenomenon being studied (Lubistira & Wahyuningsih, 2025). Based on this foundation, this study takes the film *The Legend and Butterfly* (Otomo, 2023) as its subject, focusing on the character of Oda Nobunaga as the main character who becomes the center of the storyline development and demonstrates the complexity of psychological needs throughout the film. The data were collected by watching the film repeatedly, noting relevant scenes and dialogues, and then classifying Nobunaga's behavior based on Henry Murray's categories of needs.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the analysis, it is found that there are six dominant needs in Nobunaga: Achievement, Affiliation, Defendance, Dominance, Nurturance, and Rejection. Each of these needs appears under different conditions and has implications for understanding Nobunaga's character from a psychological perspective.

### Need for Achievement



Figure 1. Victory at the Battle of Okehazama

Source: *The Legend and Butterfly* (minute 00:52:14)

信長: 皆の者、次は美濃じゃ。われわれ美濃を取り戻すぞ。

*Nobunaga: Minna no mono, tsugi wa Mino ja. Wareware Mino o torimodosu zo*  
Nobunaga : Everyone, the next destination is Mino. We will take Mino back

The scene presented in Figure 1 shows Nobunaga returning to Owari with a joyful expression after achieving a major victory in the Battle of Okehazama. The cheers of the soldiers accompanying the return create an atmosphere of euphoria that reflects the pride of the troops in defeating an enemy force that was far larger in number.

In the dialogue, Nobunaga enthusiastically states that the next objective is to reclaim Mino, which is the birthplace of Nohime, Nobunaga's wife. The victory in the Battle of Okehazama demonstrates Nobunaga's ability to face major challenges. However, Nobunaga does not remain immersed in the euphoria but immediately sets a new objective, namely reclaiming Mino.

This attitude emphasizes an orientation toward continuous achievement and higher standards of success. In addition to its strategic value, Mino also holds personal significance for Nobunaga because it is the birthplace of Nohime and the location of Inabayama Castle. Therefore, Nobunaga's attitude in the scene indicates the presence of a need for achievement.



Figure 2. The successful recapture of Mino

Source: The Legend and Butterfly (minute 00:54:07)

濃姫: ほうか。美濃手に入れた今、人質じゃった我らはな、役目、まはやあらへん  
 ということか

Nohime: Hō ka. Mi no te ni ireta ima, hitojichi datta warera wa na, yakume, mahaya arahen  
 to iu koto ka.

Nohime: I see. Now that Mino has been taken, it means that we, who were once hostages,  
 no longer have any role to play, is that it?

The scene presented in Figure 2 shows Nobunaga standing in front of Inabayama Castle together with Nohime after the successful conquest of Mino Province. At that moment, Nobunaga considers three possible names, namely Gizan, Giyou, and Gifu, before finally deciding on the name Gifu as the new name for the region. At the same time, Nobunaga also changes the name of Inabayama Castle to Gifu Castle with a sense of pride.

In the dialogue, Nohime states that after Nobunaga successfully gains control of Mino, the role as a political hostage is no longer necessary. This statement emphasizes the success of Nobunaga in achieving the intended objective.

This success is marked by the change of the region's name and the castle's name, which not only symbolizes military victory but also reflects Nobunaga's ambition to expand power and unify Japan. Therefore, Nobunaga's actions in this scene indicate the presence of a need for achievement.

### Need for Affiliation



Figure 3. Nobunaga pleading to Nohime.

Source: The Legend and Butterfly (minute 02:02:08)

信長: 側に、、僕の側におってくれ

Nobunaga: soba ni, , washi no soba ni otte kure

Nobunaga: Stay by my side... stay with me.

The scene presented in Figure 3 shows Nobunaga visiting Nohime's residence after receiving information from Sadaie that Nohime is ill. Nobunaga then meets Nohime and invites Nohime to go to Azuchi in order to receive better treatment. However, Nohime instead asks Nobunaga to leave. With sincerity and a fragile expression, Nobunaga kneels before Nohime and asks Nohime to remain by Nobunaga's side.

The dialogue indicates Nobunaga's concern for Nohime's condition. The visit is not merely intended to see Nohime, but also to bring Nohime to Azuchi so that proper medical care can be provided. Nobunaga's request, expressed in a sorrowful tone, shows that Nohime's presence holds significant emotional meaning. This action reflects a strong drive within Nobunaga to maintain emotional closeness and a personal bond with Nohime. This situation emphasizes that Nobunaga requires Nohime's presence as a figure who provides emotional support amid various pressures. Therefore, Nobunaga's attitude in this scene reflects the presence of a need for affiliation.

### Need for Defendance

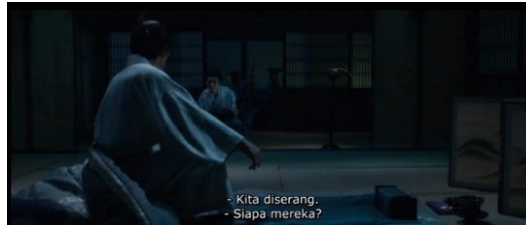


Figure 4. The Honnō-ji Incident

Source: The Legend and Butterfly (minute 02:23:01)

蘭丸: 敵将、敵将にございます

信長: 敵とは

蘭丸: それが明智どのの軍勢と見られます

*Ranmaru: Tekisho... tekisho ni gozaimasu.*

*Nobunaga: Teki to wa.*

*Ranmaru: Sore ga Akechi-dono no gunzei to miraremasu.*

Ranmaru: The enemy... the enemy forces have arrived.

Nobunaga: The enemy, you say?

Ranmaru: It appears to be Lord Akechi's army.

The scene presented in Figure 4 shows Nobunaga waking from sleep after hearing the sound of approaching troops. The troops turn out to be the forces of Akechi Mitsuhide who carry out an act of betrayal. Ranmaru immediately warns that the enemy has arrived and surrounded Honnoji Temple, the place where Nobunaga is resting. The forces of Akechi then launch an attack and set Honnoji Temple on fire. Nobunaga together with loyal retainers attempts to defend the temple by shooting arrows and drawing swords. However, due to the imbalance in the number of troops, all of Nobunaga's followers eventually fall in battle.

The following dialogue excerpt shows Ranmaru informing Nobunaga with heavy breathing that the enemy has reached the area near Honnoji Temple and that the troops appear to be the forces of Akechi Mitsuhide.

This situation indicates that Nobunaga faces a direct threat from the betraying forces. In a desperate situation with no remaining possibility of survival, Nobunaga ultimately chooses to perform seppuku as a final act of honor. This action reflects a strong drive to defend dignity and self-respect. Therefore, this scene indicates the presence of a need for defendance in Nobunaga.

## Need for Dominance



Figure 5. The head of the family

Source: The Legend and Butterfly (minute 00:38:26)

濃姫: 今私は敵将の妹じゃ

調略の道具として惨めに使われるのなら潔く自害する

信長: お主の役目は私の妻じゃ!

*Nohime: Ima watashi wa tekishō no imōto ja.*

*Nōryaku no dōgu to shite mijime ni tsukawareru no nara isagiyoku jigai suru.*

*Nobunaga: Onushi no yakume wa watashi no tsuma ja!*

Nohime: Right now, I am the sister of the enemy commander. If I am to be miserably used as a tool for strategy, I would rather die with honor.

Nobunaga: Your role is to be my wife!

The scene presented in Figure 5 shows Nobunaga attempting to calm Nohime, who is overwhelmed with grief after learning that Nohime's father has fallen on the battlefield. In deep sorrow, Nohime asks Nobunaga to immediately reclaim Mino, the homeland of Nohime. However, Nobunaga states that such an action is not so simple. Feeling hopeless, Nohime runs into the house with the intention of ending life. In this situation, Nobunaga approaches Nohime, who is pointing a knife. Nobunaga firmly states that Nohime's duty is to become a wife. Nobunaga then takes the knife from Nohime's hand, while Nohime remains silent with a sorrowful gaze.

The following dialogue excerpt also shows Nobunaga firmly stating that Nohime's duty at that moment is to become a wife. This statement appears as a response to Nohime's expression that Nohime is the younger sibling of an enemy general. Nohime also emphasizes that if existence is treated only as a political tool, then suicide is considered the most honorable choice.

These scenes and dialogues indicate that Nobunaga firmly takes control of the situation and determines Nohime's role. This attitude reflects Nobunaga's dominance in the relationship, as authority is asserted and Nohime's actions are directed according to Nobunaga's will. Therefore, this scene indicates the presence of a need for dominance in Nobunaga.



Figure 6. Nobunaga's anger

Source: The Legend and Butterfly (minute 01:21:24)

信長: 焼き払え、、、女子供も一人残らず殺してしまえ

ごろざ: 大殿

信長：女子供までも皆殺しじゃ！

*Nobunaga: Yaki harae... Onna kodomo mo hitori nokorazu koroshite shimae*

*Goroza: Ootonō*

*Nobunaga: Onna kodomo made mo minagoroshi ja!*

Nobunaga: Burn it all... kill even the women and children, leave not a single one alive.

Goroza: My lord...

Nobunaga: Even the women and children, kill them all!

The scene presented in Figure 6 shows Nobunaga in a state of anger and disappointment when ordering the troops to burn all temples without exception, including women and children. This anger emerges because the monks are considered to support the betraying side, namely the Azai and Asakura clans. Nobunaga then questions why religious leaders seek power within the realm of politics. In the statement, Nobunaga also expresses willingness to bear all punishment and sin for the actions that are ordered. During the night, the troops carry out the command by attacking and burning the temples.

The dialogue between Nobunaga and the troops shows that Nobunaga firmly orders the entire force to kill and burn everyone without exception. Several soldiers appear shocked and hesitant to carry out the command. However, Nobunaga reiterates the order in a harsher tone, indicating that the emotional state has reached its peak.

These scenes and dialogues indicate that Nobunaga possesses a dominant attitude and full authority over the troops. The command to burn and kill without exception reflects an effort to assert power and absolute control over the situation. Therefore, the action reflects the presence of a need for dominance in Nobunaga.

### Need for Nurturance



Figure 7. Nobunaga saving Nohime

Source: The Legend and Butterfly (minute 01:09:07)

信長：わしのつまにさわんな！

*Nobunaga: Washi no tsuma ni sawanna!*

Nobunaga: Don't touch my wife!

The scene presented in Figure 7 shows Nobunaga and Nohime chasing a thief who has stolen Nobunaga's candy. After successfully taking the candy back, Nobunaga and Nohime walk home. However, Nohime's steps stop after hearing the cries of the child who had previously stolen the candy. When attempting to intervene while the child is being pulled by the hair, Nohime is suddenly attacked by one of the vagrants. Acting swiftly, Nohime kills the vagrant, which triggers a fight and creates a large disturbance. In the midst of the chaos, Nohime becomes distracted while trying to retrieve a fallen pouch, causing Nohime to be surrounded and scream. At that moment, Nobunaga shouts

emotionally, “Do not touch my wife!” The shout intimidates the people around, allowing Nobunaga and Nohime to take advantage of the situation and escape from the disturbance.

Nobunaga’s dialogue, shouting at the vagrants not to touch Nohime, shows courage and a protective attitude toward Nohime.

These scenes and dialogues indicate that Nobunaga attempts to protect and provide a sense of safety for Nohime. Nobunaga’s shout upon seeing Nohime surrounded reflects concern and a strong desire to protect Nohime from danger. This action represents Nobunaga’s role as a protector who seeks to safeguard the safety of a loved one amid a chaotic situation. Therefore, this scene indicates the presence of a need for nurturance in Nobunaga.



Figure 8. Preparing medicine for Nohime

Source: The Legend and Butterfly (minute 02:05:01)

信長: 伊吹山に薬草園を作った 各地から種を取り寄せ幾千もの薬草を育てるもう治らぬ病などない

これは南蛮の薬草じゃ。さあ、、、飲め

*Nobunaga: Ibukiyama ni yakusōen o tsukutta. Kakuchi kara tane o tori-yose ikusen mo no yakusō o sodateru. Mo naoranu yamai nado nai.*

*Kore wa nanban no yakusō ja. Saa... nome.*

Nobunaga: I built a medicinal herb garden on Mount Ibuki. I gathered seeds from many places and cultivated thousands of medicinal herbs. There is no longer any illness that cannot be cured. This is a medicinal herb from Nanban. Now... drink it.

The scene presented in Figure 8 shows Nobunaga preparing medicine for Nohime, who is ill. Nobunaga states that various medicinal plants have been cultivated on Mount Ibuki and declares that there is no illness that cannot be cured. Nobunaga then prepares a medicinal mixture from foreign herbs believed to be able to cure Nohime and asks Nohime to drink it. However, because the smell is very strong, Nohime refuses and asks Nobunaga to drink it first. After Nobunaga drinks the medicine, Nohime finally drinks the mixture while holding the breath.

The dialogue excerpt also shows Nobunaga stating that a medicinal garden containing thousands of plant species has been established on Mount Ibuki and that various medicinal plants have been collected from many regions as an effort to cure different illnesses, including the illness suffered by Nohime.

Nobunaga’s attitude of care, concern, and protection toward Nohime is clearly visible. Nobunaga builds a medicinal garden, gathers plants from various regions, and prepares a special medicine from foreign herbs for Nohime’s recovery. The willingness of Nobunaga to drink the medicine first demonstrates affection and an intention to reassure Nohime that the medicine is safe to consume. This action reflects Nobunaga’s role as a figure who nurtures and cares for a loved one during a time of weakness and illness. Therefore, this scene indicates the presence of a need for nurturance in Nobunaga.

## Need for Rejection



Figure 9. Sadaie's request



Figure 10. One who has no feelings

Source: The Legend and Butterfly (minute 01:18:42 - minute 01:18:53)

さだいえ: もう少し心ある言葉を

信長: さだいえ、今の僕に心などない

*Sadaie: Mou sukoshi kokoro aru kotoba wo*

*Nobunaga: Sadaie.... Ima no warawa ni kokoro nado nai*

Sadaie: Please say something with a little more heart.

Nobunaga: Sadaie... right now, I no longer have any feelings.

The scene presented in Figure 9 shows Sadaie kneeling before Nobunaga after Nobunaga previously meets Nohime. In this encounter, Nobunaga speaks harshly to Nohime, influenced by the loss of many soldiers on the battlefield. Witnessing the situation, Sadaie gathers the courage to ask Nobunaga to treat Nohime more gently. However, in Figure 10 Nobunaga responds to Sadaie's request by stating that at that moment Nobunaga has no feelings.

The dialogue indicates that Nobunaga rejects Sadaie's request to behave more gently toward Nohime. Nobunaga's statement emphasizing that Nobunaga "has no feelings" demonstrates a harsh attitude and a clear refusal of Sadaie's advice.

This attitude reflects a strong form of rejection toward Sadaie's request. Nobunaga's statement also shows an emotionally closed condition and an unwillingness to accept suggestions from others after the loss of many soldiers in battle. Therefore, this scene indicates the presence of a need for rejection in Nobunaga.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the film *The Legend and Butterfly* (2023) directed by Keishi Otomo, this study identifies six dominant needs based on Henry Murray's theory of personology: need for achievement, need for affiliation, need for defendance, need for dominance, need for nurturance, and need for rejection. These six needs consistently appear through the actions, dialogues, and strategic decisions carried out by Nobunaga throughout the storyline.

The need for achievement appears when Nobunaga wins the Battle of Okehazama, sets a new objective to reclaim Mino, and changes the name of Inabayama Castle to Gifu Castle as a symbol that Mino has been successfully reclaimed. The need for affiliation is reflected when Nobunaga asks Nohime to remain by Nobunaga's side. The need for defendance appears in the Honnoji incident when Nobunaga chooses seppuku in order to preserve honor. The need for dominance is reflected in Nobunaga's assertion of Nohime's role as a wife and in the command for the total elimination of enemies. The need for nurturance is shown when Nobunaga protects and cares for Nohime during illness by preparing a special medicinal mixture. The need for rejection appears when Nobunaga refuses Sadaie's request regarding Nobunaga's harsh attitude toward Nohime.

These findings indicate that Nobunaga's personality is not formed solely by ambition for power, but also by emotional dynamics and interacting psychological needs. These six needs become the foundation of character formation and influence political decisions, aggressive actions, expressions of affection, and emotional relationships.

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