




*Research Paper*

## The effect of flow experience on teachers' self-developmental behavior and educational performance with the mediating role of social responsibility

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### Abstract

**Aim:** This study aimed to investigate the effect of flow experience on teachers' self-developmental behavior and educational performance with the mediating role of social responsibility using a descriptive-survey method. The study population included all high school teachers in Zahedan, 333 of whom were selected as a statistical sample based on the Morgan table using simple randomization. Data collection tools were Dispositional Flow Scale-2 (DFS-2) by Jackson & Eklund (2002), Self-developmental Behavior Questionnaire by Ahmadi et al. (2017), Educational Performance Questionnaire by Zandi (2013), and Social Responsibility Scale by Carroll & Stewards (2003). Experts approved the face and content validity of the questionnaires. Construct validity was approved via factor analysis. Reliability was approved by Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability was above 0.7. SPSS-23 and SmartPLS-3 software were used for data analysis. The results showed that flow experience was effective on educational performance and self-developmental behavior, with path coefficients of 0.491 and 0.716, respectively. It was also indirectly effective on self-developmental behavior and educational performance with path coefficients of 0.243 and 0.336, respectively. Therefore, emphasizing on challenge-skill balance, clear goals, unambiguous feedback, focus on task, merging of action and awareness, loss of self-consciousness, sense of control, transformation of time, and autotelic experience, flow experience could

affect educational performance and self-developmental behavior of high school teachers in Zahedan, Iran.

**Keywords:** *Flow Experience, Self-Developmental Behavior, Educational Performance, Social Responsibility*

## **Introduction**

Due to increasing changes in political, social, and economic environments, educational systems consider ongoing development of teachers a necessity. Therefore, self-developmental behavior, which includes a set of measures related to planned programs based on democratic human values, aiming to improve the educational performance of schools and the behavior of teachers, is one of the tools for achieving the professional development of teachers (Taghipour et al., 2017). It also includes personal and prospective measures of teachers to develop work-related knowledge and skills (Abili et al., 2014). It can create many opportunities for teachers to participate in learning, creating an ideal environment for the collaboration of the participants (Rezaei, 2019).

Any activity and effort in this huge system affects the students and eventually the society and teachers are the main actors in this field; therefore, certain measures are required to elevate their effectiveness and efficiency (Soltani et al., 2016). Accordingly, one of the most important and influential variables that can be related to teachers' inner understanding of and satisfaction with the work environment is flow experience. Csikszentmihalyi considers flow experience an attractive and pleasant experience for the person, where an activity is performed only because of its nature regardless of the influence of external motivations (Rahimpour et al., 2019). Considering the importance of flow experience in improving teachers' performance, basic planning appears necessary for scientific progress and improvement of educational system staff. Strengthening self-developmental behaviors is an effective factor in making these changes (Jafari et al., 2017), which include a set of measures related to the planned changes aiming at improving educational performance. One of the important dimensions of development is the concept of the individual in general and social responsibility (Taghipour et al., 2017). Due to the relationship between flow experience and teacher empowerment as well as inner satisfaction in the workplace and social responsibility (Mohsenian et al., 2018), teachers with appropriate levels of flow experience in performance indices, including teaching skills, experience higher self-confidence. They will also believe in being more effective and determined in their work and will create more valuable ideas (Wang & Zhang, 2012). Therefore, if

teachers improve their skills and can combine the levels of challenges and skills they face in their working life, they may become so indulged in their activities that they enjoy their work to the fullest, and perform their serious job as a teacher not because of external motivations such as salary, but because of the rewarding nature of their job. Therefore, considering the livelihood problems as well as the numerous challenges of teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic and virtual and distance education, and now the resumption of regular education after the pandemic, the need for further research in this field becomes apparent. According to the above and given that no research has been done on flow experience, self-developmental behaviors, educational performance, and social responsibility of teachers, the present study sought to answer the question of whether flow experience affects self-developmental behavior and educational performance of teachers with the mediating role of social responsibility.

## **Methodology**

The present descriptive-survey research was conducted with a modeling approach based on structural equation modeling. The statistical population of the study included all high school teachers in Zahedan (districts one and two) totaling 2500 people. The sample size was estimated to be 333 people using the Morgan table and based on the variance of the statistical population through the pilot method. Flow experience was measured using the 36-item Dispositional Flow Scale-2 (DFS-2) by Jackson and Eklund (2002) with nine components (challenge-skill balance, clear goals, unambiguous feedback, focus on task, merging of action and awareness, loss of self-consciousness, sense of control, transformation of time, and autotelic experience); Self-developmental Behavior Questionnaire of Ahmadi et al. (2017) with five components (empowerment, motivation, commitment, supervisor support, and organizational support), Educational Performance Questionnaire of Zandi (2013) with three components (teaching method, evaluation and use of educational tools) and Social Responsibility Scale of Carroll & Stewards (2003) with five components (conscientiousness, discipline, rational behavior, reliability, and hard work). Given the components and sample size, in addition to the face and content validity that was approved by experts, confirmatory factor analysis was used to confirm the validity of the instruments in SPSS-23 and Smart PLS software. After eliminating covariance errors, fit indices analysis, and factor analysis was confirmed and structural equation modeling was used to analyze the data at the level of inferential statistics.

## Results

In the inferential statistics section, the variance-based structural equation modeling approach was used to examine the research hypothesis: “the flow experience has an effect on self-developmental behavior and educational performance of high school teachers in Zahedan with a mediating role of social responsibility”. The evaluation indices of the totality of the structural equation model and the main parameters of this model indicate that the data support the theoretical model of the research. In other words, the data fit into the model and the indices indicate the desirability of the structural equation model. The results show that flow experience directly predicts 71.6% and 31.3% of the variance of the self-developmental behavior and educational performance variables, respectively. It also predicts 25% of self-developmental behavior and 40.7% of educational performance indirectly through social responsibility. Considering that the path coefficients are positive, the value of the t-statistic is above the critical range ( $>1.96$ ) and the significance level is less than 5%, it can be said that the independent variable can explain the variance of the dependent variable, and that the social responsibility variable in the flow experience mediates the relationship between flow experience and self-developmental behavior and educational performance. Hence, the research hypothesis is confirmed.

## Discussion and conclusion

One of the most effective factors in the success and effectiveness of educational organizations, especially schools, is that their teachers, in addition to having mutual and active group collaborations, adapt to ongoing environmental changes and adopt proper procedures to develop their skills and abilities via gaining experience. In the present study, analyses and structural equations modeling approved the model of measuring flow experience and social responsibility on self-developmental behavior and educational performance. The present result is in line with the results of some other studies that follow. Kazemi & Irani (2020) reported the significant relationship of flow experience and organizational culture with the performance of elementary teachers. Jalali & Iman (2020) suggested that the variable of social responsibility has a direct impact on job performance. Chow & Lee (2021) concluded that flow experience has a positive effect on self-developmental behavior. Maeran et al. (2020) found a relationship between flow experience and social responsibility of employees. Aydin Kuchuk (2022) believes that high-quality manager-employee relationships have a positive and significant effect on employees' flow experience and that the fit between the person and the job has a positive and significant effect on

employees' flow experience. Fulin (2020) reported that high school teachers' flow experience had a significant effect on their educational performance. In line with the results of the present study, the following are recommended. Improving the performance of teachers, and the emergence of self-developmental behaviors and responsibility requires furnishing the needs perceived by teachers, comprehensive support, and financial and structural resources for schools (components of flow experience). Therefore, it is necessary to design, plan, and implement in-service programs, assess needs, and pay attention to teachers' views in this field. Education administrators should be aware that flow experience, self-developmental behavior, and educational performance at school can be realized through the revision of the education system and the improvement of dynamism in the dimensions of policies, curricula, and learning philosophy. Therefore, proper planning in this regard is necessary. It is also recommended to hold training workshops to empower teachers psychologically to get acquainted with the methods of gaining positive experiences in the workplace and ultimately to feel more in the flow.

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