INVESTIGATING THE ROLE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT IN EXPERIENCING FLOW

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Abstract: *This study investigates the role of the social support in predicting the flow experience among adult participants. Flow Experience is a state of deep immersion in activities and optimal engagement in activities which is crucial for well-being, Happiness, productivity and quality of life. This research aims to bridge this gap by examining how Social support affect the propensity to experience flow. The study employs a quantitative research design, collecting data through Questionnaire from 100 students (51 males and 49 females) aged 17-34 from various streams and various colleges in Madhya Pradesh. Social support and flow experience scale were used to assess level of social support and flow experience. Correlation analysis and regression analysis to explore the relationships between the variables.*

Regression analysis reveals that Social Support (β=.78) Positively impacts the experience of flow. The results underscore the importance of social support to enhance flow experiences, Which provides valuable insights for educators, students, and psychologists.

Key Words: *Social Support, Flow Experience.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Flow is a Psychological state where the Person is fully involved in an activity to point of forgetting time and surrounding except forgetting involvement in activity. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, 2014). The concept of flow was introduced by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1975) in his book Beyond Boredom And Anxiety. The concept like flow was not entirely new, Maslow described it as Peak Experience (1964) and Laski as a concept of Ecstatic Experience(1961) but Csikszentmihalyi did a very systematic and empirical work on the concept of flow. (Abuhamdeh S. (2020).) That is why Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi is also known as Father of Concept Flow.

Flow is an Experience where our Psychic energy is in control and attention is focused to achieve goal and our consciousness is continuously in transaction with present to match the demand of goal. When a person organizes consciousness that is the time they experience flow which leads to better quality of life. Those individuals who are not capable to control their consciousness, usually don't experience flow e.g. Schizophrenics because they face the problem of hallucinations and delusions. Self-centered and Self-obsessed people also find it difficult to experience flow. (Csikszentmihalyi Mihaly,1990)

Csikszentmihalyi characterized flow by nine dimensions i.e.,

1. Balance Between Perceived Challenge And Perceived Skill
2. Clear Goals
3. Immediate Feedback
4. Merging Of Action And Awareness
5. Concentration On The Task
6. Sense Of Control
7. Loss Of Self-Consciousness
8. Time Distortion
9. autotelic experiences (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1997).

Social Support:
Social support plays a crucial role in our mental health, Happiness and Quality of life; Social support represents the amount of quality and quantity support received and perceived by person. For authentic happiness, real social support is important. Quality social support is more necessary than quantity social support, in order to achieve authentic happiness.
The World Health Organization defines health(1948) as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."(WHO,2006). The definition of WHO about health also reflects the importance of social support for leading healthy life.
Studies repeatedly suggest that those who believe their friends and family to be supportive report higher levels of satisfaction than those who question the support of their social network. The link between perceived support and happiness reflects both the trait-like personality of support recipients, as well as social interaction(Lakey, Brian 2013)
According to seminal work by House (1981), social support is of four major types:
 1. Emotional support: includes support of empathy, love, trust, and care from relationship.
2. Instrumental support includes support related to services and materials that directly assist a person in need.
3. Informational support includes support related to information like advice, suggestions, and career guidance etc.
4. Appraisal support usually includes support of positive evaluation of self like positive affirmations, feedback etc.

There are three social support aspects that affect a person's health status and level of happiness. The first is linked with the features of social networks to which a person is connected and belongs, in which relationship is established through networks and links. This structural dimension is the bases of individuals' relationships, the size of relationship networks, intimate friends available, and frequency of contact. The second aspect of social support is the content of social relationships, which can be said as the functional social support System that includes the features of emotional support, such as love and empathy. In this sense, informational support is concerned with gathering facts and addressing problems, advisory and participation support is linked to ideas and emotions, and instrumental support is related to help and services.The third aspect of social support is social network evaluation, which involves the measurement of the quantity and quality of support as well as satisfaction with social relationships.(VonDras DD, Madey SF).

2. OBJECTIVES:
This study aims to investigate the role of the Social Support in experiencing flow. In the light of above the present study was planned to address the following objectives:
   1. To examine the pattern of relationship between Social Support and flow experience.
   2. To examine the role of Social Support in predicting flow experience.

3. Hypothesis:
   1. There would be positive relationship between Social Support and flow experience.
   2. There would be significant role of Social Support in predicting flow experience.

4. Method:
Sample : A Total number of 100 adult participants of age between 17-34 were selected to participate in study. The study included equal number of male and female (51 males and 49 females) from various academic streams Engineering, Medical, Science, Commerce with 25 participants from each stream from various colleges of Madhya Pradesh.

Design:

In the present research, Correlation and regression analyses have been conducted to explore the relationships between the variables. Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) measures the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables, while regression coefficients (β) represent the relationship between predictors and the dependent variable, indicating the change in the dependent variable for a one-unit change in the predictor.

Tools:
The following tools were used in the study for data collection.
1. Measure for Social Support: Social Support scale constructed and standardized by Ritu Nehra, P. Kulhara and S.K. Verma, Department of Psychiatry, PGIMER, Chandigarh. It Contains 18 items. It is a 4 point Likert Scale with completely agree to completely disagree as end points. Maximum Score can be 72 and Minimum Score can be 18.

2. Measure For Flow Experience: The Flow Short Scale developed by Rheinberg, Vollmeyer, & Engeser, 2003 consists of 13 items. Ten items measure flow experience. These items are rated on a 5 point scale with "not at all" and "very much" as the endpoints. Three items measure perceived importance. The scoring is based on Likert scale ranging from Max Score as 65 to Min Score 13.

Procedure: Researcher contacted the participants and obtained their consent to participate in the study. Researcher briefly explained about the purpose of research. Participants were also instructed that their responses will be confidential and will be used for academic purpose only. They were informed to ask their queries if any. After that, participants were given the scales (Big five Personality Trait Questionnaire and Flow Experience Scale) with a request to indicate their responses on the items of different scales. Participants took 30-45 minutes to give their responses by ticking on the appropriate alternatives. Participation in the research was voluntary. After data collection, responses in the form of scales were collected and participants were given thanks for their participation. Data was Analyzed through SPSS Software. Correlation and regression analyses have been conducted to explore the relationships between the variables.

5. Results:
The dataset includes information on participants' age, academic stream, gender, and Social Support including flow experience. The mean scores for different streams and genders providing a comprehensive overview of how Social Support and flow experience vary across academic disciplines and between males and females. Table 1 indicates the descriptive statistical analysis reveals that students in science students exhibit the highest levels of Flow Experience with mean scores of 42.8. Students of Science showed high social support with a mean score of 47.2.

Stream	Social Support		Flow Experience	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
Engineering (N=25)	44.9	13	40	11.9
Medical (N=25)	44.2	14	41	14
Science (N=25)	47.2	15.1	42.8	14.1
Commerce (N=25)	35.9	12	37.8	12.1

Table 1: Mean score of Different Streams.

Gender	Social Support		Flow Experience	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male	41.8	13.8	40.1	13.4
Female	44.3	14.3	41.3	12.7

Table 2: Mean score of Gender

Table 2 Indicates Mean scores of male and female students. Interestingly, both genders have relatively similar mean scores for flow experience and social support. Females have a slightly higher mean score for social support and Flow experience.

Correlation Analysis:
The Table 3 presented below shows the Pattern of relationship between Social Variable and Flow experience. The Correlation Coefficient between social support and flow experience is significant (R=0.78). The result of correlation analysis between social support and flow experiences the relationship between these variables.

Variables:	Flow Experience
Social Support	.78**
Note: $p < 0.01$**	

Table 3: Correlation Analysis

Regression Analysis:

Table 4 indicates Regression Analysis. Regression analysis indicates a strong Positive relationship between the independent and dependent variables, with significant explanatory power with good portion of 61% variance, and the independent variable appears to have a meaningful impact on the dependent variable.

CRITERION VARIABLE = FLOW EXPERIENCE						
	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	β	T	F
SOCIAL SUPPORT	.783[a]	.614	.61	.783	12.48	155.75

Table 4: Regression Analysis

6. Discussion and Implication:

Both Hypothesis were accepted through research analysis. The findings of the present study show positive correlation between social support and flow experience. And regression analysis also shows the positive role of social support in flow experience. "We are social animals" Human beings are biologically programmed to find social company and other human beings around them important. We feel complete when we are with surrounded with people. The Latin Phrase "being alive" was derived from "inter hominem esse" which means "to be among men" Various surveys proved that people feel Most happy when we are with friends, family, or just in company of others supportive environment also reduces stress. (Csikszentmihalyi, M. 2002). Social support helps in building positive emotions, self-efficacy and self-confidence which helps in feeling more positive about self, which helps in immersing in activities without doubting the self. Flow is usually more intense during interactive and collaborative activities due to the presence of other people, they give feedback about the activity that makes activity more interesting, which impacts the intensity of flow experience (Magyaródi T 2017). Those people who are having good social support usually enjoys collaborative activities which helps in experiencing better flow.

In older adults, leisure social support was significantly and positively related with Flow experience and subjective vitality. social support increases subjective vitality, also increases and leisure which can provide older adults with opportunities to interact with family and friends.(Chang, L. C.2020). Flow experience is negatively correlated with loneliness in nursing home residents during COVID-19 Pandemic Because social support helps in addressing loneliness, thereby decreasing loneliness (Chang, L. C. et.al 2021).

The fulfillment of basic human need is enhanced by the experience of flow during a shared and interactive activity. In comparison to solitary activities, social interactions provide a higher quality of flow experience (Magyaródi T, Oláh A 2017). Social support has an important role in academic flow students usually get social support most from their parents', Parental support can help student focus recognize the significance of work and task commitment. Several studies have reported the relationship between flow and commitment of task Syarifa & Sulistiani (2011). Students who have good social support feel comfortable and relaxed because social support helps in reducing their workload thereby providing strength to them. (Kemala, E., Safitri, J., & Zwagery, R. V. (2018). There is a very strong positive association between social support and flow experience. When a student feels accepted, they get engaged in activities together and also get advice from friends during problem so they feel high social support, and it influence flow Higher the social support, higher will be the flow Stop social support increases flow(Husnah, N., & Dewi, R.2015).

The implication of the study can be useful for students, educators, parents and counselors who want to induce flow for better academic performance. Flow is responsible for goof academic performance, happiness, well-being and stress reduction. Social support interventions in students helps to achieve flow as they feel confident about themselves, they feel accepted and also, they feel less stressed. There are usually two sources of support for students i.e. Parental and friends. Parental support help students focus on their work and from friends they usually get good guidance because of same age group they share problems which helps them reducing stress through expression of problem. Social helps in achieving flow, which is very essential for quality of life.

7. CONCLUSION:

The present research paper presents detailed description on the role of the Social Support in predicting the flow experience in individuals. While, the correlation analysis highlights that Social support has a positive correlation with flow experience. Individual having higher social support will experience high flow in activities. The regression analysis underscores the significant role of Social support in facilitating or hindering flow experience. These insights can be

utilized to promote social support which facilitates flow experience which is responsible for personal growth, skill development and well-being.

8. Limitations:

- The sample size of the study is too small to generalize.
- The study was restricted to only four academic domains.

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