



## Self-compassion, Employee Burnout and Performance: Serial Mediation by Free Time Management and Flow Experience

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose** - In the last decade, researchers have shown growing interest in finding the variables related to employee burnout and performance. Recent studies have shown that various positive psychological concepts, particularly flow experience and self-compassion, have positive effects on employee burnout and performance.

**Aims** - This study aims to investigate the role of self-compassion on burnout and performance through free time management and flow experience at work.

**Design/Methodology** - Using a comprehensive model with a cross-sectional design, a survey study was constructed with a sample of 214 employees, collected from both public and private industry employees. SPSS v24 was used to test the serial mediator's model.

**Findings:** The results demonstrated that self-compassion reduce burnout and enhance performance and these relationships are mediated serially by free time management and flow experience.

**Limitations of the study** - This study used self-report instruments with a cross sectional design. Future studies are suggested to use experience-sampling method to avoid common method bias and to measure instant flow experience.

**Practical implications** - Practices that increase self-compassion, free time management and flow activities can be beneficial to enhance job performance while reducing burnout. Moreover, encouraging self-growth, autonomy, and feedback can foster flow state at work.

**Originality/value** - Less attention was given to free time management and this study provided support for the importance of administering employee's time outside the work.

### KEY WORDS

workflow, self-compassion, free time management, burnout, performance

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

In today's fast paced organizations, while the prevalence of employee burnout is increasing dramatically (Threlkeld, 2021), organizations' goal is still to maximize employee's performance (Butler & Rose, 2011). Mental health support and positive psychology interventions have been adopted to reduce burnout and increase performance in overwhelming work environments (Donaldson, Lee & Donaldson, 2019). This approach brings several beneficial outcomes to organizations such as high productivity and low burnout (Krekel, Ward & De Neve, 2019).

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In today's fast paced organizations, while the prevalence of employee burnout is increasing dramatically (Threlkeld, 2021), organizations' goal is still to maximize employee's performance (Butler & Rose, 2011). Mental health support and positive psychology interventions have been adopted to reduce burnout and increase performance in overwhelming work environments (Donaldson, Lee & Donaldson, 2019). This approach brings several beneficial outcomes to organizations such as high productivity and low burnout (Krekel, Ward & De Neve, 2019). Previous research has identified many internal aspects including self-compassion and flow experience which increase performance and decrease burnout (Bryce & Haworth, 2002; Neff, Rude & Kirkpatrick, 2007). These internal elements also improve desirable work behaviours such as higher energy (Demerouti, Bakker, Sonnentag & Fulagar, 2011), which ultimately increase individual and organizational performance (Bakker, 2008; Barnard & Curry, 2011).

Although there are various studies which investigated flow experience in different contexts (Bakker, Oerlemans, Demerouti, Slot & Ali, 2011; Ljubin-Golub, Rijavec & Olcar, 2020; Mosing, Butkovic & Ullen, 2018; Tse, Nakamura & Csikzentmihalyi, 2020), "flow at work" requires a more comprehensive level of understanding to extend our knowledge on employee burnout and performance. On the other hand, there are many studies which emphasized the amount of time spent on work (Bruce, 2009) as well as the requirements of time management to reduce burnout (Reith, 2018). The present study aims to investigate the relationships among self-compassion, burnout, and performance through free time management (FTM) and flow state. To the best of our knowledge, there has not been such a comprising model which includes both burnout and performance associated with self-compassion, flow and FTM altogether.

## 2 HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Burnout is defined as a negative psychological state consisting of emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy at work (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Emotional exhaustion is described as the feeling of fatigue that individuals experience both emotionally and physically (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Cynicism refers to an external behaviour that includes one's disengagement from work (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Finally, inefficacy is one's perception of being incapable of succeeding in a task (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Taken together, these components of burnout might result in anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances and headaches (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Thus, reduction of burnout is crucial to increase positive affect and well-being in better work environments as well as to enhance performance (Bakker, Demerouti & Verbeke, 2004; Sonnentag, 2015).

### 2.1 FLOW, EMPLOYEE BURNOUT AND PERFORMANCE

Flow refers to absorbing oneself and dealing with the activity while feeling loss of track of time (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). People in flow state are in control of their own actions and internal processes related to the activity but they lose the awareness of external environment. Csikszentmihalyi (1975) emphasized that losing awareness mainly represents moving away from anxious thoughts. Indeed, individuals who are not worried about the consequences of the activity enjoy the activity itself. However, the activity should not be excessively tough or easy for individuals; instead, it should match up with their abilities. Otherwise, they may feel boredom and apathy (Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989).

According to Csikszentmihalyi (1975), the disposition of flow is characterized by autotelic personality features. The word 'autotelic' is based on the combination of two Greek words, which are auto (self), and telic (motivated) and alike, it creates high intrinsic motivation- that is, achieving a task for one's own sake rather than for external rewards (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Yazar, 2015). Bakker (2008) showed that intrinsic work motivation is strongly related with extra-role performance that was assessed by peers and supervisors. Kuo and Ho (2010) also found that intrinsic interest of flow experience is a strong predictor of service quality, which indicates a greater customer satisfaction

and in turn, organizational performance. As supported by previous studies, flow is a driving factor to enhance performance (Bakker, 2008; Kuo & Ho, 2010); thus, we expect an increase in performance through flow's positive contribution.

Flow was also found to be significant to reduce negative experiences such as depressive thoughts and burnout (Mosing, Butkovic & Ullen, 2018). More specifically, Mosing, Butkovic and Ullen (2018) found that propensity to flow experience is associated with low depressive symptoms and emotional exhaustion (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Similarly, Ljubin-Golub, Rijavec and Olcar (2020) supported that students' flow experiences significantly reduced academic burnout. It has been shown that enjoyment and intrinsic motivation experienced by flow experience prevent individuals from being afflicted with the detrimental effects of burnout (Ljubin-Golub, Rijavec & Olcar, 2020; Mosing, Butkovic & Ullen, 2018). In consequence, flow is expected to reduce burnout and increase performance.

## 2.2 FREE TIME MANAGEMENT, FLOW, EMPLOYEE BURNOUT AND PERFORMANCE

Flow experience is differentiated between leisure time and occupational activities; people indeed experience flow or 'optimal experience' higher at work than in leisure (Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989). Since individuals have clear goals and are more likely to receive feedback for their performance at work, they are more encouraged to achieve their goals (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). On the other hand, higher happiness and relaxation are experienced in leisure irrespective of whether individuals were in flow or not (Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989). Csikszentmihalyi and LeFevre (1989) findings also show that most people were having a more positive experience in driving activity than in watching TV, where driving was not defined as a leisure activity by researchers. These findings draw the conclusion that individuals can have a more positive experience when the activity is challenging and goal oriented (Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989).

Similarly, individuals participate in passive leisure activities (e.g., checking social media, listening to music, etc.) more on regular basis (Schiffer & Roberts, 2017). According to researchers, this is because people believe that passive leisure activities are more enjoyable while flow activities require considerable amount of energy to start (Schiffer & Roberts, 2017). People act biased for "procrastinated happiness" by postponing flow activities or happiness itself (Schiffer & Roberts, 2017). Thus, FTM might be an effective strategy to ease start of flow kind activities.

FTM is the organization of time that helps individuals in various ways and is associated with a higher quality of life (Wang, Kao, Huan & Wu, 2010; Wang, Wu, Wu & Huan, 2012). Leisure or free time is defined as the non-obligatory period away from work or obligations which allow individuals to fulfil their needs such as personal care or pleasure needs on their own (Leitner & Leitner, 2012). FTM, on the other hand, means the organization of priorities, setting goals, scheduling, developing techniques and attitudes towards free time (Wang, Kao, Huan & Wu, 2010). According to Wang, Wu, Wu and Huan (2012), FTM reduces boredom and idle time for oneself.

Moreover, studies revealed that the quality of leisure, which is referred as leisure satisfaction, is important for lower burnout (Stanton-Rich & Iso-Ahola, 1998). Planning leisure might be significant to increase leisure satisfaction which increase the quality of life (Han & Patterson, 2007; Wang, Wu, Wu & Huan, 2012). Besides, enhancing free time quality also decreases the amount of idle time spent (Wang, Kao, Huan & Wu, 2010).

The characteristics of FTM such as setting goals or developing techniques might be associated with flow experience since individuals tend to have optimal experience in challenging and goal-oriented leisure activities (Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989). FTM may fulfil the value of individuals' free time, and this may lead to more frequent flow experience because individuals will be clear about their goals and have control on their leisure. Moreover, a higher level of happiness experienced in leisure might encourage people to feel refreshed, and this may result in higher positive affect and flow at work (Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989; Demerouti, Bakker, Sonnentag & Fullagar, 2011). Thus, it is expected that FTM facilitates flow experience, which will reduce burnout and increase performance.

### 2.3 SELF-COMPASSION, FREE TIME MANAGEMENT, FLOW AND EMPLOYEE BURNOUT

Self-compassion means to be sensitive and insightful about one's own pain while being open to experience mistakes without criticism and graciousness for oneself (Neff, 2003a). Neff (2003a) identified three main components of self-compassion, which are self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness. Self-kindness refers to being kind toward oneself; common humanity is the fact that all human beings suffer; and mindfulness is the idea of being aware of the present moment and accepting one's thoughts and feelings (Neff, 2003a).

Self-compassion is associated with mastery goals which consist of motivation derived from curiosity (Barnard & Curry, 2011). Self-compassionate individuals are high in intrinsic motivation, persistence and have high task pleasure (Barnard & Curry, 2011) like individuals with autotelic characteristics (Tse, Nakamura & Csikzentmihalyi, 2020; Yazar, 2015). Furthermore, people with high self-compassion can estimate their actual performance more accurately than people with lower self-compassion (Barnard & Curry, 2011). Estimating one's limits accurately might be important to preserve challenge/skill balance for flow activities, which may increase the likelihood of flow.

Furthermore, Barnard and Curry (2011) found that students with higher self-compassion procrastinate less while students with lower self-compassion show the opposite trend like people who are prone to attending passive leisure activities more and procrastinating flow kind activities (Schiffer & Roberts, 2017). Do the highly self-compassionate individuals start flow activities more easily to be happier over the long run? One contributing factor regarding this point might be FTM since it offers individuals the affordance to use their time more productively and efficiently by scheduling and setting goals as other features (Wang, Kao, Huan & Wu, 2010). As such, individuals with high self-compassion levels might be better at the management of their personal time, which might create more flow in turn.

Moreover, a recent study has supported that self-compassion is negatively associated with burnout (Dev, Fernando, Lim & Consedine, 2018). This finding could explain why indicators of burnout such as job demands (e.g., workload and work-home conflict) are easier to cope with self-compassion (Neff, 2003a). In brief, self-compassion supports coping with negative life events and to experience life with more positive affect like flow state (Neff, 2003a).

As indicated above, there are many studies which show particularly, the relationship between self-compassion, burnout and performance, flow (Bryce & Haworth, 2002; Neff, Rude & Kirkpatrick, 2007) and FTM (Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989, (Han & Patterson, 2007; Wang, Kao, Huan & Wu, 2010). These previous studies show the direction of how these variables are related but not the order or organization. This study aims to bring a serial model hypothesizing a chain linking the mediators (self-compassion, FTM and flow) in a specific order which can be applied by practitioners, managers, decision makers or individuals. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study which included a serial mediation between self-compassion, FTM and flow to decrease burnout and increase performance of the individuals. Therefore, we expect that higher self-compassion will predict better FTM skills, which will create more flow and altogether will contribute to lower burnout and higher performance. Thus, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis1: Self-compassion predicts lower burnout through the mediating roles of FTM and flow experience.

Hypothesis 2: Self-compassion predict higher performance through the mediating roles of FTM and flow experience.

### 3 METHOD

#### 3.1 SAMPLE AND PROCEDURE

Data were collected through snowball sampling method via online survey shared in social media platforms lasting for two months. White-collar employees consisting of office workers who are asked to define their current occupation, and with no psychiatric diagnosis were preferred for this study to eliminate confounding variables. Due to difference in working conditions (e.g., schedule and work environment) between office workers and blue-collar workers, consisting of fieldworkers, this study focused on office workers with similar working conditions. Turkish validated versions of the scales were distributed with an informed consent, and all subjects agreed to participate before filling out the questionnaires. The ethical approval for this study was received from the university ethics committee. The incomplete or outlier data were excluded.

The participants were employed full-time in various sectors and the most frequent sectors were education (N = 84, 39.3%) and finance (N = 50, 23.4%) from both public and private organizations in Turkey. 130 (60.7%) participants were female while 84 (39.3%) of them were male. The mean age of the sample was 32.91 (SD = 6.92).

#### 3.2 MEASURES

##### 3.2.1 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM

This form included gender, age, education, income as well as marital and parenting status. The information about work conditions such as occupation, sector, position, occupational experience (e.g., 'How long have you been working in your current position?') and working hours had been collected with this form.

##### 3.2.2 SWEDISH FLOW PROPENSITY SCALE (SFPS)

The scale was developed by Ullen et al. (2012) and adapted to Turkish ( $\alpha = .85$ ) by Yazar (2015) to measure individuals' predispositions to experience flow within work. There are three dimensions of flow as work ( $\alpha = .82$ ), everyday life ( $\alpha = .80$ ) and leisure ( $\alpha = .86$ ). It was a 5-point Likert scale (1= never, 5= everyday) and one sample item was 'I have sense of complete control when I am doing something for my work/household work or other routine chores/leisure'.

##### 3.2.3 FREE TIME MANAGEMENT SCALE (FTMS)

The scale was developed by Wang, Kao, Huan and Wu (2010) and was adapted to Turkish ( $\alpha = .88$ ) by Akgul and Karakucuk (2015) to assess individuals' FTM attitudes, skills, and strategies. The scale includes 15 items with 4 sub-dimensions, which are (1) goal setting and evaluating ( $\alpha = .81$ ) with a sample item of 'I set goals for my free time'; (2) free time attitudes ( $\alpha = .79$ ) with a sample item of 'Free time is meaningful for me'; (3) technique ( $\alpha = .71$ ) with a sample item of 'I organize my free time daily or weekly'; and (4) scheduling ( $\alpha = .73$ ) with a sample item 'I think that making schedules wastes time'. The scale was rated on 5-point-Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree).

##### 3.2.4 SELF-COMPASSION SCALE SHORT VERSION (SCSSV)

The scale ( $\alpha = .80$ ) was developed by Neff (2003b) and adapted to Turkish by Yildirim and Sari (2018). The Turkish adaptation version of the scale includes 11 items without any sub-scale. One sample item was 'I try to be understanding and patient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like'.

### 3.2.5 BURNOUT SCALE SHORT VERSION (BSSV)

Pines (2005) published the short version of Burnout Scale with 10 items measuring individuals' physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion levels. It is a 7-point Likert scale (1= never, 7= always) adapted to Turkish ( $\alpha = .93$ ) by Capri (2013).

### 3.2.6 WORK PERFORMANCE SCALE (WPS)

Sigler and Pearson (2000) revised the scale to measure performance of individuals at work. Col (2008) adapted the scale ( $\alpha = .87$ ) to Turkish, which includes four items. One sample item of the scale was 'I can generate a solution as quickly as possible whenever I have a problem at work'.

## 3.3 DATA ANALYSIS

Process Macro for SPSS v.24 was used to conduct serial mediation analyses (Model 6, Hayes, 2017) to test the relations between self-compassion and burnout as well as performance with serial mediators as FTM and flow. 5000 bootstrap samples were used to test the significance of the model. This method generated 95% confidence intervals (CI) of the indirect effects.

## 4 RESULTS

### 4.1 CORRELATION RESULTS

Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics and correlations for variables. The results demonstrated that self-compassion is strongly correlated with work-flow ( $r = .33, p < .01$ ), burnout ( $r = -.33, p < .01$ ) and performance ( $r = .26, p < .01$ ). Furthermore, FTM is significantly correlated with work-flow ( $r = .33, p < .01$ ), burnout ( $r = -.16, p < .05$ ) and performance ( $r = .30, p < .01$ ). As expected, there was a strong correlation between work-flow, burnout ( $r = -.23, p < .01$ ) and performance ( $r = .39, p < .01$ ).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and correlations among variables

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
Age	32.91	6.92	-					
Self-compassion	36.40	6.48	.21**	.80				
Free time management	53.94	9.34	.01	.27**	.88			
Work-flow	78.12	9.37	.06	.33**	.33**	.85		
Burnout	31.65	12.45	-.02	-.33**	-.16*	-.23**	.93	
Performance	17.17	2.38	.13	.26**	.30**	.39**	-.18**	.87

Notes. Reliability coefficients are presented bold on the diagonal.  $N = 214$ . \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$  (two-tailed).

### 4.2 SERIAL MEDIATION ANALYSES AND TEST OF THE HYPOTHESES

Results of the serial mediation analyses are presented in Fig. 1. The study found a negative direct effect of self-compassion on burnout (total effect;  $B = -.631, p < .001, R^2 = .2620$ ). When the mediators were included in the analysis, this coefficient was reduced but was still statistically significant (direct effect,  $B = -.462, p < .05$ ). FTM did not have a significant direct effect on burnout while flow was found to be significant negative predictor of burnout ( $B = -1.258, p < .001$ ).

The indirect effect of self-compassion via FTM on burnout is non-significant. In addition, the indirect effect of self-compassion on burnout via flow is significant ( $B = -.127$ ,  $SE = .07$ ,  $95\% CI = [-.260, -.007]$ ). Then, the indirect effect of self-compassion on burnout via both FTM and flow are significant ( $B = -.045$ ,  $SE = .02$ ,  $95\% CI = [-.096, -.009]$ ), confirming Hypothesis 1(See Table 2). The results of the serial mediation analyses for burnout are presented in Fig. 1.

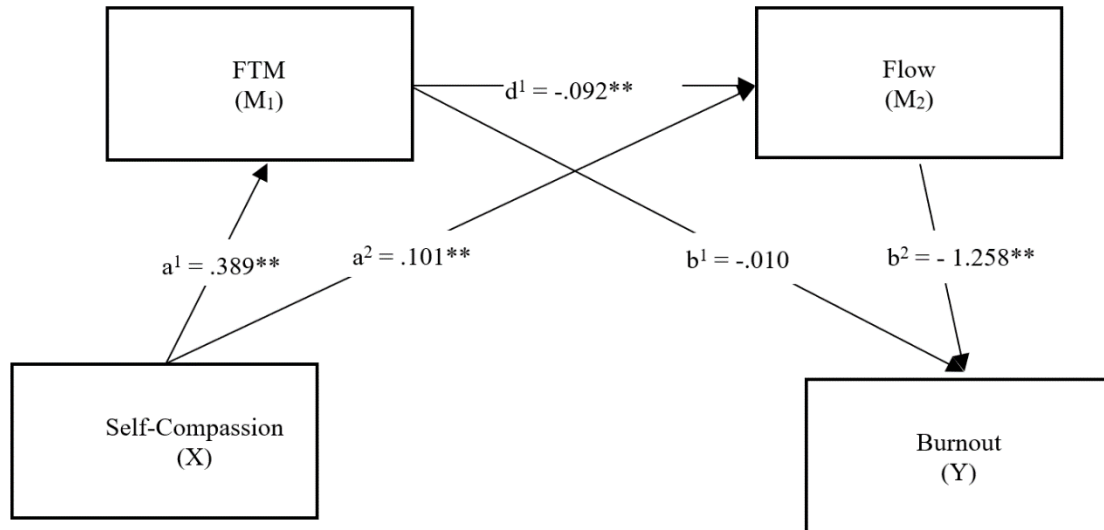


Fig 1. The result of serial multiple mediational model for burnout  
*\*p < .05, \*\*p < .001. Values shown are unstandardized coefficients.*

The study found a positive direct effect of self-compassion on performance (total effect;  $B = .096$ ,  $p < .001$   $R^2 = 20.20$ ). When the mediators were included in the analysis, this coefficient was reduced but was still statistically significant (direct effect,  $B = .054$ ,  $p < .05$ ). FTM ( $B = .045$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and flow were found to be positive predictors of performance ( $B = 17.40$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Table 2. Table 2. The direct and indirect effects between variables

Variables	Endogenous			
		Free Time Management	Flow	Well-being
Exogenous				
Self-Compassion	Direct Effect	.275	.415	-
	Indirect Effect	-	.105	.713
	Total Effect	.275	.519	.713
Free Time Management	Direct Effect	-	.382	-
	Indirect Effect	-	-	.524
	Total Effect	-	.382	.524

The indirect effect of self-compassion via FTM on performance is significant ( $B = .018$ ,  $SE = .01$ ,  $95\% CI = [.005, .038]$ ). In addition, the indirect effect of self-compassion on performance via flow is significant ( $B = .018$ ,  $SE = .03$ ,  $95\% CI = [.001, .038]$ ). In addition, the indirect effect of self-compassion on performance via both FTM and flow is significant ( $B = .006$ ,  $SE = .01$ ,  $95\% CI = [.001, .014]$ ), confirming Hypothesis 2 (See Table 3). The results of the serial mediation analyses for performance are presented in Fig. 2.

Table 3. Indirect effect of self-compassion (SC) on performance FTM and flow

Path	Coefficient	95% CI	
		LL	UL
SC → FTM → Performance	.018	.005	.038
SC → Flow → Performance	.018	.001	.038
SC → FTM → Flow → Performance	.006	.001	.014
Total effect	.096	.048	.144
Direct effect	.054	.007	.101
Total indirect effect	.042	.019	.068

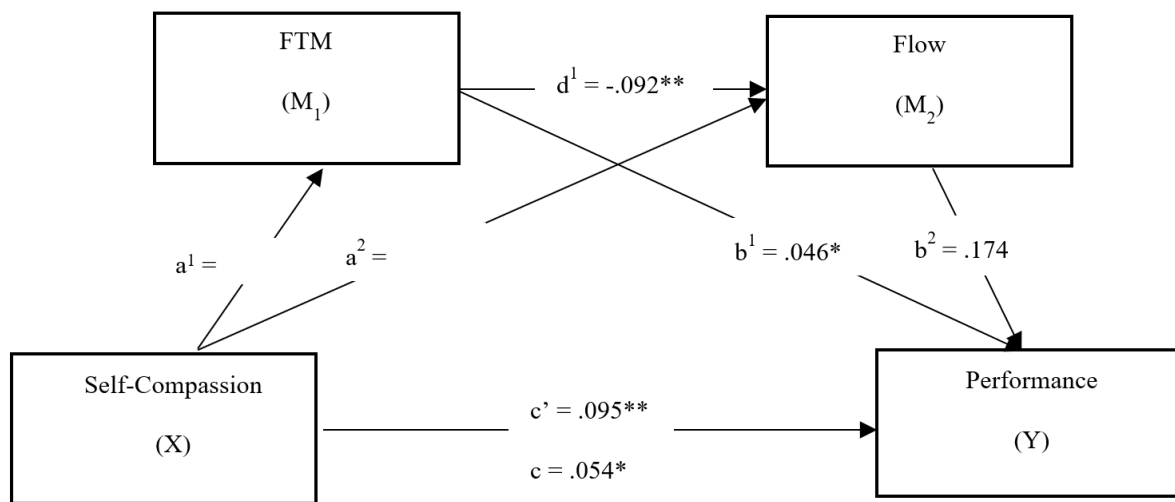


Fig 2. The result of serial multiple mediational model for performance

## 5 DISCUSSION

Our findings have shown that self-compassion is significantly associated with low burnout and high job performance through the roles of FTM skills and flow experience. More particularly, self-compassion is related to better FTM skills, and this relationship seems to be revealing more flow, which altogether reduces burnout. Self-compassion burnout relationship is not significantly mediated by FTM while it is significantly mediated by flow only. On the other hand, self-compassion performance relationship is significantly mediated by FTM and by flow separately and together. Overall, all the variables are significantly linked with low burnout and high work-related performance. Therefore, all the research hypotheses were supported.

First, we measured the direct effect of flow experience on employee burnout. Consistent with the existing literature, we found that flow is negatively associated with burnout but positively with performance (Kuo & Ho, 2010; Mosing, Butkovic & Ullen, 2018). The findings support that flow releases positive affect, control and enjoyment over one's job and it helps to stay in the action process (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). By this way, it is more likely to be engaged on a task and to be preserved from emotional strain. The results also supported that flow was experienced at work more than in leisure (Bryce & Haworth, 2002; Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989). Seeking new goals to achieve,



receiving performance feedback and attaining challenge/skill balance are the main reasons why people reach or prefer to reach the optimal experience mostly at work (Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989). Individuals who are prone to flow feel pleasure in an environment where they can have control over their job and satisfy their needs to achieve, whereas people who are not prone to flow or have poor intrinsic motivation are most likely to look for relaxation as experienced in passive leisure activities (Schiffer & Roberts, 2017).

Consistent with the previous studies, we have also found that FTM has a significant positive influence on employee burnout through flow experience (Han & Patterson, 2007; Wang, Kao, Huan & Wu, 2010). FTM enables individuals to create their leisure meaningfully (Wang, Wu, Wu & Huan, 2012). Leisure is crucial to refrain one from work stress; and therefore, increasing the quality of leisure is important to increase the satisfaction of leisure (Trenberth, Dewe & Walkey, 1999). A more satisfactory leisure experience also buffers the burnout (Stanton-Rich & Iso-Ahola, 1998). Our results suggest that individuals who are more likely to manage their free time have a more satisfactory leisure experience and it brings about fewer negative feelings and more enjoyment along with absorption for flow state. The positive mood state that is procured by leisure has a large impact on the positive aspects of life (Han & Patterson, 2007; Wang, Kao, Huan & Wu, 2010). Thus, FTM can extend the quality of the leisure consisting of enjoyment and control, and this causes a rise in flow state. Thereby, it provides an increase in performance and a decrease in burnout as well.

Moreover, the analyses show that self-compassion has a significant impact on employee performance and burnout, and this was sequentially affected by FTM and flow experience. Self-compassion has become more important to investigate by means of its protective nature (Neff, 2003a). Higher self-compassion sets off less negative emotional reaction to failure and higher motivation to try again (Stepherd & Cardon, 2009). Hence, the likelihood of the blight on burnout and performance decreases. Moreover, when people are happier, they become active participants of social activities to go into flow and have higher satisfaction for their leisure (Lyubomirsky, King & Diener, 2005). In line with these results, we have found that self-compassionate individuals show better skills on FTM so they can set meaningful goals for their free time. Our results suggest that better FTM skills displayed by self-compassionate individuals allow for the setting of accurate free time goals regarding appropriate challenging activities that match with their skills, which will consequently increase the likelihood of flow experience. However, self-compassionate individuals' FTM is not sufficient to reduce burnout on its own.

## 5.1 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The initial contribution of this paper has been to extend self-compassion, FTM and the flow theory literature by examining their contribution to employee performance and burnout. Particularly, self-compassion is determined as a factor that may create FTM and flow. Moreover, FTM skills display an important role to increase flow experience within work. These variables are found to be significant serial mediators to reduce burnout and increase performance. This extends our knowledge about the power of positive internal aspects.

## 5.2 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study are important to underline the importance of positive psychological interventions in the workplace. Specifically, adapting intervention strategies to increase self-compassion, FTM and flow state skills can be beneficial to increase job performance while reducing burnout. Furthermore, improving opportunities for self-growth, autonomy, and practices for feedback loop can trigger flow state in the workplace (Bakker, Demerouti & Euwema, 2005). Finally, designing trainings for FTM might be useful to foster positive impact on flow at work and increasing passive leisure activities out of work.

### 5.3 LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The present study has some limitations. First, self-report instruments were used with a cross sectional design. Future studies could use experience-sampling method (ESM) to measure the variables over time to see the variations between mental processes and to avoid common method bias. Moreover, ESM could be more accurate to assess flow state instantly (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1987). In addition, the Turkish adaptation of self-compassion scale did not include any of the subdimensions (self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness) of the original scale (Yildirim & Sari, 2018). Finally, it can also be noted that cross-cultural studies with expanded sample sizes are needed to extend this research further.

## 6 CONCLUSION

This study shows that positive internal aspects, namely self-compassion and flow experience, and FTM skills are important to reduce burnout and increase performance at work. Self-compassion acts a mechanism that fosters high performance and low burnout through FTM and flow state. The findings underline the importance of positive psychological approaches and administration of leisure time for employee motivation.

#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest.

#### DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, E.A. upon reasonable request.

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