



## Analysis of Psychological skills and Sports Performance of Club Hockey Players In North East Zone, Nigeria

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**Abstract.** This study was designed to analyze the Relationship of psychological skills against sports performance of club Hockey Players in North-East Zone, Nigeria. Two objectives were set, two research questions answered; and two hypotheses tested. The study utilized Carl Roger's theory of personality grew out of his client-centered approach to psychotherapy and behavior change. The study adopted Survey Research Method. Survey research is used for descriptive, exploratory and explanatory purposes. The population for this study comprised all club Hockey players from Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe states. Each state was represented by 36 club Hockey players comprising 18 male and 18 female. Quota sampling technique was used to select a sample of 180 club Hockey Players consisting of 90 male and 90 female. Research instrument used for the study was a 30-item self-developed Questionnaire and the statement were derived from literature in cognizance with the objectives of the study. These items constitute information on the demographic data of the respondents, information on flow; the performance is determined through a winning of matches which attract three (3) points. A draw attract (1) point while a loss attracts no point. Results showed that there was a Significant Relationship between Psychological skill and sport performance among club Hockey Players in North-East Zone, Nigeria. While there was no significant difference psychological skills and sport performance among male and female club Hockey players in North-East Zone, Nigeria. It was therefore concluded that psychological skills are positively related to sport performance that the higher the psychological skills, the higher the performance among club Hockey players in North-East Zone, Nigeria, and it was also recommended that self-concept is independent of performance, coaches should therefore be aware that self-concept is not a hindrance to sport performance among club Hockey Players in North-East Zone, Nigeria and should therefore not placed too much emphasize on it.

**Keywords:** Psychological Skills, Sports Performance, Flow State, Hockey Players, Gender Differences

### 1. Introduction

Attaining high standard performance in sports and physical activity is the desire of every athlete. Achieving high standard of sports performance depends on many factors, as training, skill acquisition, fitness level, total concentration, time transformation, emotional control and sports participation. Understanding the psychological factors that contribute to sports performance is very important for both coaches and sports psychologists. Knowledge of factors associated with the attainment of flow is important for those interested in the quality of athlete's experience and performance in competition. Flow is generally viewed as peak performance state, Jackson and Roberts, (1992); Mchman & Grove, (1991) and Private and Bundrick (1991) explained peak performance as a standard of accomplishment in sport performance, while flow is a psychological state. Achieving peak performance is an important goal for competitive athletes and coaches, and flow can facilitate the attainment of this. The mind-set accompanying flow tends to push a person to his/her limits, and thi is one reason why flow is so important to athletes seeking to do their best. As athletes and coaches know all too well, it is difficult to have the body perform to high levels when the mind is not focused (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Psychological skill (PS) is an individually designed combination of methods selected to attain psychological skill needs (Gill, 2000b). Weinberg and Gould (1999) stated that, the use of psychological skills such as goal setting, positive self-talk, imagery, visualization, self-efficacy and relaxation training have all been shown to help athletes to perform better. There is no single Idyllic Package; each programme is individualized based on the psychological state of the individual and the sport To assemble a

successful Psychological Skill Training programme it is important to distinguish between Psychological Skill Training (PST) skills and Psychological Skill Training methods. Psychological Skill Training skills are the psychological qualities or attribute that need to be developed (confidence, concentration). The Psychological Skill Training method is that tool that will be used to help improve the Psychological Skill Training skills (Calmesl, d'Aripe-Longueville, & Souldard, 2003). Much of the early research utilizing prescriptive Psychological Skill Training Programme used single Psychological Skill Training methods to examine their effect on performance Martin, Moritz & Hall, 1999, Garza & Eltz, 1998): When implementing a Psychological Skill Training Programme, it is improbable that a single method will be employed by a sports psychologist. However, Thelwell and Greenless (2001) posited that it is more effective to employ a combination of mental skills that are related to the specific sports.

Self-confidence may be the most critical self-perception in sports psychology (Gill, 2000). The athlete must be confident that he can perform well when placed in competitive environment. Self-efficacy is a situation form of self-confidence or the belief that one is confident and can perform within a specific situation. Many studies have revealed that the most consistent difference between elite athletes and the less successful levels of self-efficacy, lies between confidence and efficacy may be emotion (Gill, 2000).

The importance of psychological skills to sports performance is well documented in the sport psychology literature such as Hardy, Jones and Gould (1996) and Williams & Krane, (1998); Thomas, Murphy and Hardy, (1999) who have developed a self-reporting instrument to measure athletes' Psychological skills and performance strategies. Eight areas were assessed including self-talk, emotional control, automat-city, goal setting, imagery, activation, negative thinking and relaxation. In general, it was expected that the more proficient athletes are at using psychological skills in their sports, the more likely they will experience flow by developing greater control over their thoughts and emotions during performance.

The relationship between flow and the two sets of psychological constructs, athletic self-concept and psychological skills were examined in this study in order to increase understanding of how these constructs may be associated with flow experiences. Flow is expected to demonstrate positive associations with performance assessments. Field Hockey is played on gravel, natural grass, sand-based or water-based artificial turf, with a small handball approximately [73mm] in diameter. The game is popularly among both males and females in many parts of the world including Nigeria. Meris Field Hockey has been played at each summer Olympic games since 1908 [Except 1912 and 1924], while women's field Hockey has been played at

the summer Olympics since 1980. The club Hockey players in the North-East Zone, Nigeria had participated in the National League Hockey Competition and National Sports Festival as far back as 1989 to date. Borno state came first [1<sup>st</sup>] at the National League Competition held in Osun - Osun state in 2000 while Yobe desert Hockey team came 2<sup>nd</sup> at the National sport festival held in Port Harcourt in 2004. Adamawa flickers of Adamawa state came 3<sup>rd</sup> at the 2004 General Salihu Ibrahim Under 21 Hocke competition held in Abuja. This level of performances by the club Hockey players in the North-East Zone, Nigeria described as a state of being completely engrossed in the execution of a performance of the exclusion of everything else. The researcher was motivated to conduct this study on Hockey players in the North-East Zone, Nigeria because of the interest the researcher has in the game to thrive. Hockey teams in the North-East Zone, Nigeria have performed extremely well at both National Sports Festivals and International Competitions before, for example in the J.F. Kennedy Hockey Tournaments. However, over the years these clubs' performances have dwindled. Although other factors like economy support from host government could be responsible for the dwindling performance, the researcher determined the relationship among flow, self-concept, psychological skills and sports performance among club hockey players in North-East zone, Nigeria.

### 1.1 Objectives of the Study

- The objectives of this study were to determine:
- Type of psychological skills applied by Club Hockey players in North-East Zone, Nigeria.
- Level of performance of Club Hockey players in North-East Zone, Nigeria
- The relationship between psychological skills and sports performance among Club Hockey players in North-East Zone, Nigeria

### 1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions were answered:

- What are the psychological skills used among club Hockey players in North-East Zone, Nigeria?
- What is the level of performance outcomes among club Hockey teams in state and national competitions in North-East Zone, Nigeria?
- What is the relationship between psychological skills and sports performance in general?

### 1.3 Hypothesis

The following null hypotheses were tested:

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between psychological skills and sports performance among club Hockey players in North-East Zone, Nigeria.

**2. Research Methodology**

The design adopted for this study was the survey method. The survey method presents accurate description of an area of interest providing detailed information that describes a phenomenon (Nworgu, 1991). Survey is also well suited for gathering demographic data that describes the composition of the sample. Pinsonneault and Kraemer (1993) defined a survey as a “means for gathering information about the characteristics, actions or opinions of a large group of people”. (Bell,1996). Survey research is used for descriptive exploratory and explanatory purposes. Osuala (2001) described survey study as that which seeks to establish relationship between a number of qualifiable variables for making prediction. (Fajonyomi, 2012) reported that survey design is used for exploratory, descriptive and explanatory purposes. It seeks information from selected individuals to represent the larger group. He further remarked that the findings obtained from selected individuals called sample can be generalized to the larger group called population. Hence this study adopted the survey method since it determined the relationship among flow, self-concept,

psychological skills and sports performance among Hockey players of North-East zone of Nigeria.

**2.1 Population and Sample**

The target population for this study comprised all club Hockey players from Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe and Yobe states. The total population for male was one hundred and seventy-five [175] while the female had a total population of one hundred and twenty-five [125]. The researcher selected a sample of eighteen [18] male Hockey players out of 35 registered players representing fifty-one-point four percent [51.4%] while eighteen [18] female Hockey players were selected out of twenty-five [25] representing seventy two percent [72%]. These male and female Hockey players were normally allowed to register for any competitive tournaments. Quota sampling techniques was used to select a sample of one hundred and eighty [180] club Hockey players consisting of ninety [90] females from the five [5] state. Quota sampling techniques is a method that ensured that a certain number of sample units from different categories with specific characteristics appear so that all these characteristics are presented. [Varke-Visser,1991].

**Table 1: Sample selection and states (male team)**

S/No	States	Registered players	Players selected	Percentage
1.	Adamawa flickers	35	18	51.4
2.	Bauchi flickers	35	18	51.4
3.	Borno flickers	35	18	51.4
4.	Gombe flickers	35	18	51.4
5.	Yobe Desert	35	18	51.4

**Table 2: Sample selection and states (female team)**

S/No	States	Registered players	Players selected	Percentage
1.	Adamawa flickers	25	18	72
2.	Bauchi flickers	25	18	72
3.	Borno flickers	25	18	72
4.	Gombe flickers	25	18	72
5.	Yobe Queens	25	18	72

*Source: Borno state sport council, 2011.*

**2.2 Method of Data Analysis**

The data collected for this study were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and Percentage to describe the demographic information about the respondents. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 while analysis of covariance was used to test hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

**3. Results**

**Research Question 1:** What are the psychological skills among Club Hockey Players in North-East Zone, Nigeria  
 Table 4.4a Psychological skills used among club Hockey Players in North-East Zone, Nigeria

**Table 3: Psychological Skills**

Item	Borno	Gombe	Bauchi	Adamawa	Yobe
	$\bar{X} \pm SD$	$\bar{X} \pm SD$	$\bar{X} \pm SD$	$\bar{X} \pm SD$	$\bar{X} \pm SD$
1.Maintain a positive attitude	3.72 ± 1.07	2.00 ± 0.01	2.50 ± 1.32	2.06 ± 1.39	1.82 ± 1.00
2.Level of self motivation	3.83 ± 1.15	2.00 ± 0.01	2.13 ± 0.81	1.63 ± 0.62	1.91 ± 1.06
3.Set high realistic goals					2.28 ± 0.88
4.Deal effectively with people	3.61 ± 0.97	2.00 ± 0.01	2.75 ± 1.18	2.00 ± 1.15	3.09 ± 1.48
5.I use positive self-talk					2.73 ± 1.12
6.I use positive mental imagery	3.28 ± 1.22	2.00 ± 0.01	3.38 ± 1.50	1.94 ± 0.78	3.23 ± 1.31
7.I manage anxiety effectively					2.00 ± 0.98
8.Manage our emotions effectively	4.11 ± 0.47	1.05 ± 0.23	1.43 ± 0.51	1.75 ± 1.00	1.55 ± 0.59
9.I always concentrate on my game	4.22 ± 1.00	1.05 ± 0.23	1.38 ± 0.50	1.87 ± 1.20	1.64 ± 1.09
10.I felt strong when playing			2.13 ± 1.26	1.75 ± 0.78	1.73 ± 0.88
11.I always imagine to play	3.78 ± 1.06	1.05 ± 0.23	1.93 ± 0.99	2.06 ± 1.18	1.91 ± 0.92
Total	* 5.78 ± 1.63			* 2.97 ± 1.57	* 3.41 ± 1.62

\*high performance psychological skills

Table 3 above shows the mean and standard deviation of each variable under psychological skills from which in Borno state and a total mean and standard deviation of 5.78±1.63, this indicates that Borno state team had a high level of psychological skills, while Gombe state team had a total mean and standard deviation of 2.87±0.16, this implies that Gombe state male team had a high level of psychological skills, this followed by Bauchi state male team which had a total mean and standard deviation of 3.56±1.45, Bauchi state team are having a high level of flow. Adamawa state team 5<sup>th</sup> had a total mean and standard deviation of 2.97±1.57, this indicates that Adamawa

state male team had a high level of psychological skills. While Yobe state male team had a total mean standard deviation of 3.41±1.62 which indicates that Yobe state team had a high level of psychological skills. To determine the level of performance in psychological skills [high or low] the researcher used the marks obtained on the response mode SA (5)A(4) UD (3) D (2) and SD (1). All mean and standard deviation of the response mode and the mean and standard deviation 2:00 and above indicate a high level of psychological skills while 2:00 and below indicates a low level of performance.

**Research Question 2A:** What is the level of performance outcomes among club Hockey teams, in state and national competition of players in North-East zone of Nigeria.

**Table 4: Summary of state competition 2008**

S/No	Teams	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS	PS	
1.	Adamawa flickers	3						5	4	+	4
2.	Bauchi flickers	3				2	1	4	4		2
3.	Borno flickers	3			1	2		5	3	+2	5
4.	Gombe flickers	3				2		6	7	1	2
5.	Yobe Desert	3			2	1		8	5	+3	7

Table 4 indicates state male team competition played in 2008. The records show that Yobe Desert Male team from Yobe State came first (1<sup>st</sup>) from the three matches played. Borno flickers team of Borno State came second (2<sup>nd</sup>) while Adamawa flickers team of Adamawa state came third (3<sup>rd</sup>) Bauchi flickers team of Bauchi state came fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) and Gombe flickers team of Gombe state came fifth (5<sup>th</sup>)

**Table 5: Summary of male state competition 2009.**

S/No	Teams	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS	PS
1.	Adamawa flickers	3		2		3	2	+1	5	3 <sup>rd</sup>
2.	Bauchi flickers	3		1	1	4	5	-1	4	
3.	Borno flickers	3	1	2		6	4	+2	6	1 <sup>st</sup>
4.	Gombe flickers	3		2	1	7	6	+1	2	
5.	Yobe Desert	3	1	2		5	2	+3	5	2 <sup>nd</sup>

Table 5 indicates state team played in 2009. The records shows that Borno flickers from Borno state came first ((1<sup>st</sup>)) from the three matches played. Yobe Desert team of Yobe state came second (2<sup>nd</sup>) while Adamawa flickers team from Adamawa state came third(3<sup>rd</sup>).Bauchi state team of Bauchi state came fourth(4<sup>th</sup>)and Gombe flickers team of Gombe state came fifth(5<sup>th</sup>)There was no state competition in 2010.

**Table 6:** Summary of male state competition 2011.

S/No	Teams	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS	PS
1.	Adamawa flickers	3	1	1	1	3	2	+1	4	1 <sup>st</sup>
2.	Bauchi flickers	3	1	-	2	4	4	-	3	2 <sup>nd</sup>
3.	Borno flickers	3	2	-	1	5	4	+1	6	3 <sup>rd</sup>
4.	Gombe flickers	3	-	2	1	3	5	2	2	5th
5.	Yobe Desert	3	2	-	1	8	6	+2	6	1st

Table 6 Indicates state male teams played in 2011. The record shows that Yobe Desert male team from Yobe state came first (1<sup>st</sup>) from three matches played. Borno flickers team of Borno state came second (2<sup>nd</sup>) while Adamawa flickers team of Adamawa state came third (3<sup>rd</sup>)Bauchi flickers team of Bauchi state came fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) and Gombe flickers team of Gombe state came fifth(5<sup>th</sup>)

**Table 7:** Summary of male state competition 2012.

S/No	Teams	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS	PS
1.	Adamawa flickers	3	-	2	-	5	3	+2	5	1 <sup>st</sup>
2.	Bauchi flickers	3	2	1	-	6	4	+2	7	2 <sup>nd</sup>
3.	Borno flickers	3	1	1	1	7	6	+1	4	4th
4.	Gombe flickers	3	-	2	1	8	7	+1	2	5th
5.	Yobe Desert	3	2	1	-	10	7	+3	7	1st

Table 7 Indicates state male teams played in 2012. The records show that Yobe Desert team male team from Yobe state came first (1<sup>st</sup>) from the three matches played. Bauchi flickers team of Bauchi state came second (2<sup>nd</sup>) while Adamawa flickers team of Adamawa state came third (3<sup>rd</sup>). Borno flickers team of Borno state came fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) and Gombe flickers team of Gombe state came fifth (5<sup>th</sup>)

**Table 8:** Summary of male state competition 2008-2012 Results.

S/N	Teams	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS	Position
1	El-Kanemi flickers	15	7	3	5	8	4	+4	24	3rd
2	Yobe Desert	15	9	4	2	10	3	+7	31	1st
3	Bauchi flickers	15	8	5	2	7	4	+3	29	2nd
4	Gombe flickers	15	6	3	6	6	6	0	21	4th
5	Adamawa flickers	15	5	4	6	5	7	-2	19	5th

Table 8 indicates the summary of matches played by each team from 2008-2012. The Records shows that Yobe Desert team from Yobe State came first(1<sup>st</sup>) from the 15 matches they played. Bauchi flickers team of Bauchi state came second while El-Kanemi flickers team of Borno state came third(3<sup>rd</sup>). Gombe flickers team of Gombe state came fourth(4<sup>th</sup>)and Adamawa flickers team of Adamawa state came fifth(5<sup>th</sup>)

**NB:**

P-Number of matches played

W- Number of matches won (a win attack 3 points)

D-Number of matches drawn (a draw attacks 1 point)

L-Number of lost matches (no print)

GF-Number of goals for (goals) scored by a team)

GA-Number of goals against (goals scored against an opponent)

GD-Differences in Number of goals for and against

PTS-Total Number of points a team has

PS-The overall position of a team in the competition

What is the relationship between psychological skills and sports performance in general?

Table 9: Summary of Pearson product moment correlation coefficient analysis between psychological skills and sport performance.

S/N	Variables	Flow	Sport performance	r	P-value	Decision
1	Adamawa flickers	29.5	19.0	0.726	0.008	*5
2	Bauchi flickers	26.1	29.00	0.632	0.038	*5
3	El-Kanemi flickers	27.8	24.0	0.981	0.004	*5
4	Gombe flickers	28.8	21.0	0.618	0.084	*5
5	Yobe Desert	25.7	31.0	0.935	0.480	*5

\* Significant at 0.05

Table 9 reveals the mean scores of each of the five teams on psychological skills and sport performance. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the relationship between flow and sport performance. The calculated values of  $r = 0.726, 0.632, 0.981, 0.618$  and  $0.935$  were obtained for the respective states at  $p$ -values of  $0.008, 0.038, 0.004, 0.084, 0.480$  which is less than  $p < 0.05$  level of significance. Since the calculated  $p$ -values are less than  $0.05$ , therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected which implies that there is significant relationship between psychological skills and sport performance.

#### 4. Discussion

Understanding the psychological factors that accompany successful athletic performance is a priority for applied sport psychology with a major area of focus being mental links to optimal performance. This study examined specific links between self-concept, psychological skills and strategies and the optimal mental state of flow as well as relationship between flow and optimal Performance. The results of this study are the relationship between flow and sport performance shows that there was significant relationship between flow and sports performance among club Hockey players in North-East zone, Nigeria.

Flow is an optimal psychological state that occurs when there is balance between perceived challenges and skills in an activity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). It is a state of concentration so focused that it amounts to absolute absorption in an activity. Research on flow in sport and exercise has increased in recent years (example Jackson, 1992; 1995; Jackson, Kimiecik, Ford and Marsh, 1998; Jackson & Marsh, 1996; Kimiecik & Stein, 1992) and Csikszentmihalyi (1992) has encouraged application of flow theory to physical activity settings, which is where some of his initial research into flow began (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). Theoretically, flow as an optimal mental state, would be expected to be associated with optimal athletic performance as well as providing an optimal experience.

Flow is generally viewed as a peak performance state and there is some support for this assumption (example, Jackson & Roberts, 1992; McInman & Groul, 1991, Correla on support for a positive relationship between ratings of flow performances of peak performance was obtained by Jackson and Roberts (1992) who asked athletes to reflect on their best performance and found

flow characteristics to be endorsed. McInman and Grove 1991; Privette and Bundrick (1991) have concluded that flow and Peak performance shared many similar characteristics, but should still be viewed as conceptually distinct. Privette and Bundrick (1991) distinguished between the two concepts by defining flow as an intrinsically rewarding experience and peak performance as optimal functioning. Jackson (1996) distinguishes between the two concepts by describing peak performance as a standard of accomplishment, while flow is described as a psychological state. According to Jackson, et al, (1998) correlation support was obtained for a relationship between self-reported flow state and ratings of perceived success with both measures taken after competitive event. Beyond identifying any associations between flow and peak performance, it is important to ascertain whether it is possible to promote the state of flow, that is there is a set of conditions or factors that are positively associated with athletes being able to attain flow?. Preliminary study that examined this question (Stein, Kimiecik, Daniels & Danies, 1995) failed to identify any substantive relationship between the psychological constructs, goals, competence and confidence, and statement of flow in three different sport settings during a weekend tennis tournaments, College basketball activity classes and amateur senior golf. Jackson et al (1998) did find associations between flow and three psychological variables: intrinsic motivation (Positive), perceived ability (positive), and cognitive anxiety (Negative) in general, the predictions made regarding the expected relationships between the factors assessed in this study were well-supported for example, where positive relationships were expected between flow and dimensions of the self-concepts and psychological skills measures, these were mostly found.

The results of this study on the relationship between psychosocial skills and sport performance show that there was significant relationship between psychological skills and sport performance among club Hockey players in North-East zone, Nigeria. This result is in line with the findings of Thomas, Murphy and Henry (1979) who reported that skills involved in regulating arousal processing information and managing emotions are potentially important for competitive athletes. These skills are targeted in training programmes and have been found to differentiate successful and unsuccessful athletes. Mahoney, Gabriel and Perkins, (1987) Thomas & Over, (1994). Flow is not an easy state to attain and getting into flow involves a certain level of psychological skills, such as ability to

control attention (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). The importance of psychological skills to athletic performance is well documented in the sports psychology literature (Hardy, Jones & Gould, 1996; Williams & Krave, 1998). Thomas et al (1999) have developed a self-report instrument to measure athletes' psychological skills and performance strategies. Eight areas were assessed including self-talk, emotional control, automaticity, goal, imagery activation negative thinking and relaxation. It was expected that the more proficient athletes are at using psychological skills in their sport, the more likely they will experience flow due to developing greater control over their thoughts and emotions during performance. The psychological factors predicted to be related to flow experience were automaticity, the absence of negative thinking, goal setting imagery, activation, negative thinking and relaxation. It was expected that the more proficient athletes are at using psychological skills in their sport, the more likely they will experience flow due to developing greater control over their thoughts and emotions during performance. The psychological factors predicted to be the most related flow experience were automaticity, the absence of negative thinking, goal setting, emotion control and relaxation, these skills were considered to be most conceptually relevant to the dimensions of flow from the eight psychological skills areas assessed by the Thomas et al (1999) instruments.

The result of this study on differences in psychological skills and sport performance between male and female club Hockey players in North-East zone of Nigeria shows that there is no significant difference in flow, self-concept, psychological skills and sports performance between male and female athletes. Psychological research has shown large gender difference in self-concept which is consistent with gender stereotype. For example, Duisek and Flaberty (1980) in their longitudinal study of adolescent self-concept found that males had higher self-concept in congeniality and social ability. Research with Australia samples indicates that males, compared to females, tend to have higher self-concepts of their physical abilities and mathematics, whereas females tend to have higher self-concepts in reading (Marsh, Barnes, Cairners & Tidman, 1984; Marsh, Parker & Barnes, 1985).

Share (2000) examined 620 high school and collegiate athletes of both genders to determine the relationship between goal orientation and sport confidence. The findings indicate that male and female athletes are significantly different in task orientation ego orientation and several factors related to the source of sport confidence such as skill performance, demonstration of ability physical/psychological preparation. In addition, the perceived sources of sport confidence were different between high school and collegiate athletes of both genders.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it was concluded that:

- The following are the mostly the psychological skills being used by the players; Manage our emotions effectively, I always concentrate on my game and I felt strong when playing;
- There was significant relationship between flow and sports performance among club Hockey players in North-East zone, Nigeria.
- There is significant relationship between psychological skills and sport performance among gender.

## 6. Recommendations

Based on the result of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- If level of flow is high among athletes' performance will also be high. Coaches should therefore ensure that their players attend a high level of flow during sport performance through organized competitions.
- If level of psychological skills is high among athletes' performance will also be high. Coaches should therefore ensure that their players attend a high level of psychological skills during performance.
- If the level of flow and psychological skills are high, the higher the performance among club Hockey players in North-East Zone, Nigeria. Coaches should therefore emphasize the attainment of flow and psychological skills during performance through competition and regular training.

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