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## Predictors of Coping among College Athletes with Career Choice Stress

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### INTRODUCTION:

Due to college athletes' long-term focus on sports training and competition and their reliance on sports excellence-based programs to enter college without having to take the academic entrance exam, they generally have poor academic performance. Compared with college students, college athletes are often faced with learning difficulties, as well as a lack of career exploration and decision-making abilities. To maintain training effectiveness in sports, most college athletes take advice from their coaches and parents on decisions related to pursuing further studies. They have relatively few opportunities to make decisions on their own, and their career decision-making experience is also insufficient. Due to the above-mentioned problems, many college athletes not only face more career decision stress but also choose to cope with the stress in a negative way, which adversely impact their subsequent career development. Coping refers to the cognitive and behavioral efforts of individuals in dealing with internal or external needs that exceed their own resources. The coping response that individuals adopt when they face external stress is regarded as one of the important elements influencing emotions and well-being. Past studies have investigated individuals' coping and influential factors from a holistic approach but have rarely explored the impact of specific stressors on the coping of individuals. Therefore, the results of the present study can expand the breadth and depth of academic research in the field of coping.

### METHODS:

This study explores the relationships between social support, career decision-making self-efficacy, negative mood regulation expectancies, and how college athletes cope with career decision stress. In total, 1,312 valid questionnaires were returned. The data obtained were statistically analyzed using structural equation modeling.

### RESULTS:

The results showed that social support was positively related to career decision-making self-efficacy ( $\beta = .52, p < .001$ ), negative mood regulation expectancies ( $\beta = .35, p < .001$ ), and coping ( $\beta = .13, p < .001$ ). Career decision-making self-efficacy was positively related to negative mood regulation expectancies ( $\beta = .37, p < .001$ ) and coping ( $\beta = .71, p < .001$ ). Negative mood regulation expectancies were positively related to coping ( $\beta = .18, p < .001$ ). In addition, The Sobel's test showed that career decision-making self-efficacy mediated an indirect relationship between social support and coping ( $z = 6.94, p < .01$ ) and that negative mood regulation expectancies mediated an indirect relationship between social support and coping ( $z = 5.72, p < .01$ ).

### CONCLUSION:

The findings indicated that social support, career decision-making self-efficacy, and negative mood regulation expectancies have direct or indirect relationships with college athletes' cope with career choice making stress. These findings suggest that career supports are required to provide athletes with assistance to improve their career decision-making self-efficacy, and subsequent career behaviors. In addition, enhancing career decision-making self-efficacy will help college athletes cope with career stress in a more positive way. Individuals with more positive negative mood regulation expectancies are more resistant when faced with and stress and will also adopt a more optimistic coping toward career decision making problems.

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