



Navigating Uncertainty: Strategies of College SC Coaches During the COVID-19 Crisis

Lawrence W. Judge¹, Danielle Sterner², Lena Marcus³, Adam Smith¹, Ben Kern⁴, David Bellar⁵



¹Ball State University, ²University of Central Florida, ³University of North Carolina at Charlotte, ⁴University of Wyoming, ⁵University of West Florida

Purpose

This study aimed to assess how the COVID-19 pandemic affected psychological empowerment dimensions, specifically impact and self-determination, and their subsequent effect on the coaching practices of US collegiate SC coaches.

Methods

Participants: 438 NCAA Divisions I, II, and III, and NAIA, strength and conditioning (SC) coaches

Measures: Survey with quantitative and qualitative assessments including a validated Psychological Empowerment Instrument and six specially designed items aiming to capture the extent of the pandemic's impact on the SC coaches' professional practices and mental health.

Analysis: The investigation employed a multiple linear regression to evaluate the influence of psychological empowerment dimensions on coaching agency amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Results

The 'Empowerment - Impact' dimension was a significant predictor (std Beta = 0.474, $p < 0.001$) of coaching agency.

A related model assessing the COVID-19 pandemic's self-reported influence also proved significant ($r = 0.276$, $p < 0.001$), with 'Empowerment-Self Determination' as a significant predictor (std Beta = 0.158, $p = 0.01$) of perceived impact of the COVID-19.

Conclusions

The analysis demonstrated that the 'Empowerment - Impact' dimension significantly influenced coaching agency amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting its importance in coaching **adaptability** and **response**. In contrast, only the 'Empowerment - Self Determination' was a significant predictor of coaches' self-reported pandemic impact, while other psychological empowerment dimensions had no substantial predictive effect. These findings reveal a complex interplay of empowerment factors affecting coaching practices in crisis situations.

The pandemic-induced shift to virtual coaching undermined collegiate SC coaches' autonomy and psychological empowerment, increasing stress. The findings highlight the need for adaptive strategies and enhanced psychological support from governing bodies.

Practical Implications

SC coaches could benefit from amplifying their impact and self-determination to handle crises such as pandemics. Engaging in professional development that hones psychological empowerment dimensions enables coaches to effectively navigate uncertainties. This focus is critical for sustaining high-level coaching performance in challenging contexts.

[Scan for Full Reference List:](#)



[Scan for Abstract:](#)



Model Summary - Q6-In what way has your mental health been affected during the pandemic?

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	RMSE
H ₀	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.919
H ₁	0.276	0.076	0.064	0.889

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized	Standard Error	Standardized t	p	Collinearity Statistics	
						Tolerance	VIF
H ₀	(Intercept)	2.126	0.052	41.187	< .001		
H ₁	(Intercept)	0.477	0.421	1.133	0.258		
	Empowerment - Impact	0.061	0.041	0.098	1.480	0.140	0.677
	Empowerment- Meaning	0.054	0.063	0.053	0.868	0.386	0.793
	Empowerment - Self Determination	0.131	0.056	0.158	2.361	0.019	0.660
	Empowerment - Competence	0.053	0.066	0.050	0.806	0.421	0.760

Model Summary - COVID Output (Sum of Three COVID Responses)

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	RMSE	R ² Change	F Change	df1	df2	p
H ₀	0.000	0.000	0.000	3.222	0.000		0	305	
H ₁	0.524	0.274	0.260	2.773	0.274	18.821	6	299	< .001

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized	Standard Error	Standardized	t	p	Collinearity Statistics	
							Tolerance	VIF
H ₀	(Intercept)	8.693	0.184		47.189	< .001		
H ₁	(Intercept)	5.142	1.652		3.112	0.002		
	CIS - Win-Loss	-0.005	0.026	-0.010	-0.195	0.845	0.899	1.112
	CIS - Time - Role	0.204	0.028	0.398	7.198	< .001	0.795	1.257
	Empowerment - Impact	-0.381	0.129	-0.178	-2.953	0.003	0.671	1.491
	Empowerment- Meaning	0.118	0.198	0.033	0.595	0.553	0.788	1.269
	Empowerment - Self Determination	-0.421	0.181	-0.146	-2.330	0.020	0.618	1.618
	Empowerment - Competence	0.396	0.208	0.108	1.906	0.058	0.755	1.324