

WHERE ARE THE WOMEN IN WOMEN'S SPORT?  
PREDICTORS OF FEMALE ATHLETES' INTEREST IN A COACHING CAREER

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ABSTRACT

Although post-Title IX sport participation rates for girls and women have skyrocketed, the percentages of women in sport leadership roles have plummeted. Today, women hold only 44% of head coaching positions in women's intercollegiate athletics, compared with over 90% before the passage of Title IX. Few studies have examined how the perceptions of prospective coaches, and specifically female student-athletes, may impact this downward trend. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of specific contextual factors (i.e., coach gender, female coaching role models, and perceived barriers) on coaching self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and career interest in coaching using social cognitive career theory as the theoretical framework. Participants were 205 predominantly White, heterosexual female student-athletes. Path analysis indicated that both contextual supports and barriers predicted coaching self-efficacy and that coaching self-efficacy predicted outcome expectations. Additionally, career interest in coaching was predicted by coaching self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and contextual supports and barriers. Post hoc model modifications indicated that a model portraying barriers and supports as both directly and indirectly (through their impact on self-efficacy) linked to career interest in coaching produced a better fit to the data than a model specifying only an indirect link to interest. Practical implications are discussed, as well as suggestions for further research in this relatively unexplored area of inquiry.