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# Appraisal, coping, emotion, and performance during elite fencing matches: a random coefficient regression model approach

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5

6 **Appraisal, coping, emotion and performance during elite fencing matches: A**  
7 **random coefficient regression model approach**

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19

**Abstract**

1  
2 Understanding more about the stress process is important for the performance of athletes  
3 during stressful situations. Grounded in Lazarus's (1991, 1999, 2000) CMRT of emotion,  
4 this study tracked longitudinally the relationships between cognitive appraisal, coping,  
5 emotions and performance in nine elite fencers across 14 international matches  
6 (representing 619 momentary assessments) using a naturalistic, video-assisted  
7 methodology. A series of hierarchical linear modelling analyses were conducted to: (a)  
8 explore the relationships between cognitive appraisals (challenge and threat), coping  
9 strategies (task- and disengagement oriented coping), emotions (positive and negative)  
10 and objective performance; (b) ascertain whether the relationship between appraisal and  
11 emotion was mediated by coping; and (c) examine whether the relationship between  
12 appraisal and objective performance was mediated by emotion and coping. The results of  
13 the random coefficient regression models showed: (a) positive relationships between  
14 challenge appraisal, task-oriented coping, positive emotions, and performance, as well as  
15 between threat appraisal, disengagement-oriented coping and negative emotions; (b) that  
16 disengagement-oriented coping partially mediated the relationship between threat and  
17 negative emotions, whereas task-oriented coping partially mediated the relationship  
18 between challenge and positive emotions; and (c) that disengagement-oriented coping  
19 mediated the relationship between threat and performance, whereas task-oriented coping  
20 and positive emotions partially mediated the relationship between challenge and  
21 performance. As a whole, this study furthered knowledge during sport performance  
22 situations of Lazarus's (1999) claim that these psychological constructs exist within a

1 conceptual unit. Specifically, our findings indicated that the ways these constructs are  
2 inter-related influence objective performance within competitive settings.

3 **Keywords:** cognitive-motivational-relational theory of emotion, process-oriented method,  
4 elite fencers, competition

5



1 possibility of future harms or losses) and challenge appraisals (i.e., evaluations of future  
2 gains or personal mastery). Emotions are generated by the evaluation a person makes  
3 about his or her environment in relation to personal goals, beliefs, or values (Lazarus,  
4 1991, 1999, 2000). Emotions, according to Lazarus, are defined as “an organized  
5 psychophysiological reaction to ongoing relationships with the environment, most often,  
6 but not always, interpersonal or social” (Lazarus, 2000, p. 230). Empirical findings from  
7 the sport psychology literature indicated that pleasant emotions were positively  
8 associated with challenge, whereas unpleasant emotions were positively associated with  
9 threat (e.g., Nicholls, Hemmings, & Clough, 2010; Nicholls, Levy, Jones, Rengamani, &  
10 Polman, 2011; Nicholls, Polman, & Levy, 2012). Nevertheless, Lazarus (1999) stated  
11 that coping is integral to the process of emotional arousal because “judging the  
12 significance of what is happening always entails evaluating what might be done about it,  
13 which determines whether we react, say, with anxiety or anger” (p. 37). Therefore,  
14 emotions are generated throughout appraisal, coping, and upon the outcome of a situation  
15 (Folkman, 1997). As such, coping strategies influence the emotions a person experiences  
16 and could mediate the relationship between appraisal and the subsequent level of  
17 emotional states (Lazarus, 1999, 2000).

18 Coping represents the “constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to  
19 manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or  
20 exceeding the resources of the person” (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 141). Although  
21 labelled differently across conceptual models, two dimensions have been proposed quite  
22 systematically: task-oriented and disengagement-oriented coping (Skinner, Edge, Altman,  
23 & Sherwood, 2003). These dimensions are based on the difference between engagement

1 and disengagement coping (e.g., Compas, Connor-Smith, Saltzman, Thomsen, &  
2 Wadsworth, 2001). More specifically, the present study referred to Gaudreau and  
3 Blondin's (2002) hierarchical model of coping specific to the domain of sport. *Task-*  
4 *oriented coping* represents strategies aimed at dealing directly with the stressful situation  
5 and the resulting thoughts and emotions. This dimension of coping includes strategies  
6 such as effort expenditure, time management, planning, mental imagery, logical analysis,  
7 deep breathing, and cognitive reappraisal. *Disengagement-oriented coping* represents the  
8 strategies through which a person withdraws from the process of actively striving toward  
9 the realization of desirable outcomes, including strategies such as behavioural  
10 disengagement, denial, and venting of unpleasant emotions. The ability to effectively  
11 cope with stress in a specific situation is expected to influence the quality of the outcome  
12 in the person-environment transaction (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Some researchers  
13 have previously highlighted the associations between coping and sport performance with  
14 objective and/or subjective indicators (e.g., Calmeiro et al., 2010, 2014; Doron &  
15 Gaudreau, 2014; Doron & Martinent, 2015; Gaudreau et al., 2010; Haney & Long, 1995;  
16 Nicholls, Polman, & Levy, 2010; Nicholls et al., 2012; Smith & Christensen, 1995).  
17 Task-oriented coping has been shown to correlate positively, whereas disengagement-  
18 oriented coping has been found to correlate negatively with performance.

19         While there is an inherent relationship between the key constructs of the CMRT  
20 of emotion (Lazarus, 1999), researchers have essentially focused on one or two constructs  
21 (e.g., Nicholls et al., 2011). Very few studies have explored the overall sequence of the  
22 constructs central to the CMRT of emotion (e.g., Doron & Gaudreau, 2014; Doron &  
23 Martinent, 2015; Nicholls et al., 2012; Nicholls, Perry, & Calmeiro, 2014). Using

1 structural equation modelling, Nicholls et al. (2014) have examined a model that  
2 contained appraisals, emotions, and coping and provided support for Lazarus's (1999)  
3 claim that these constructs exist within a conceptual unit. However, this study adopted a  
4 cross-sectional design and did not explore the relationships between the key constructs of  
5 the CMRT of emotion and performance indicators. A central assumption of the CMRT of  
6 emotion is that individuals' cognitive appraisals, coping actions and emotional reactions  
7 are defined as highly contextual responses that change across situations and points in  
8 time during a stressful situation (Gaudreau, Blondin, & Lapierre, 2002). However, little  
9 attention has been devoted to the ongoing process-like nature of the relation between  
10 these constructs during real high-level competition and their link with objective  
11 indicators of performance.

12 Lazarus (1999) suggested examining the key constructs of the CMRT of emotion  
13 over a prolonged period to tap into the micro-analytical aspects of the stress process. Few  
14 studies have already monitored changes in these constructs during competition and  
15 adopted process-oriented methods, such as the think-aloud protocol (Calmeiro et al.,  
16 2010, 2014; Nicholls & Polman, 2008), or the diary study (Gaudreau et al., 2010;  
17 Nicholls, Holt, Polman, & James, 2005). Doron and Gaudreau (2014) used a process-  
18 oriented method and measured each construct (i.e., perceived control, negative emotions,  
19 and task-oriented coping) as experienced between points in simulated competitive  
20 matches performed by elite fencers during training sessions. However, multiple  
21 assessments during a match potentially affect the ongoing psychological processes and  
22 performance of athletes. As such, it would seem ethically and methodologically  
23 challenging to assess these processes immediately after each point during a real high-



1 level competition. When real-time momentary assessment is not feasible, video recall  
2 appears a viable method to improve retrospective recall validity, because it increases  
3 accessibility to earlier emotional experiences (Evans, Hoar, Gebotys, & Marchesin, 2014;  
4 Lorber, 2007; Martinent, Campo, & Ferrand, 2012). In line with this, Doron and  
5 Martinent (2015) used the video recall method to explore the trajectories and within-  
6 person synergies of perceived control, threat and challenge appraisals, problem- and  
7 emotion-focused coping, and positive and negative emotions during the final stages of  
8 fencing matches. While this study provided insights into transactional processes as they  
9 occur in match endings and highlights the dynamic nature of these constructs associated  
10 with winning and losing matches, disengagement-oriented coping and objective  
11 performance indicators were omitted in the measurement scheme. Despite the promising  
12 results, further information is needed to provide deeper understanding of the inherent  
13 relationship between the constructs central to the CMRT of emotion, as they are  
14 experienced by athletes in matches, and their link with performance during high-level  
15 competitions.

16 Grounded in Lazarus's (1991, 1999, 2000) CMRT of emotion, this study used the  
17 video recall method to track longitudinally the relationships among cognitive appraisals,  
18 coping strategies, emotions and performance over the course of an international fencing  
19 match. The aims of this study were: (a) to determine the relationships between cognitive  
20 appraisal (challenge and threat), coping strategies (task- and disengagement-oriented  
21 coping), emotions (positive and negative) and objective performance; (b) to ascertain  
22 whether the relationship between appraisal and emotion was mediated by coping; and (c)



1 teams from France ( $n = 6$ ), Egypt ( $n = 1$ ) and Tunisia ( $n = 2$ ) that were competing in the  
2 qualification phase of the Rio Olympic Games. At the time of the study (i.e., 2015), all  
3 the athletes trained in France and were French-speaking. All the athletes had competed at  
4 international level ( $M = 11.78 \pm .52$  years) and taken part in several major international  
5 championships including the World Cup, World Championships and the Olympic Games.  
6 All the fencers signed a consent form prior to participating in this study. The protocol  
7 was also approved by the National Fencing Federation's ethical committee.

### 8 **Procedure and Measures**

9       Based on Doron and Martinent's (2015) study, a video methodology was adopted  
10 in order to retrospectively ask participants to recall their psychological states after each  
11 point during a fencing match in high-level competition. The videos were recorded during  
12 the Fencing World Cup 2014-2015 season and at the beginning of the qualification phase  
13 of the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio. Given the potential stress associated with the first  
14 match of the direct elimination round, only matches from the round of 64<sup>1</sup> were recorded  
15 and retained for video analysis<sup>2</sup>. The fencers who qualified in direct elimination table of  
16 64 fencers took part in the video-analysis within 48 hours of each tournament. In total, 14  
17 matches were analysed (6 won, 8 lost; 1 or 2 matches for each athlete). In all, 619  
18 momentary assessments<sup>3</sup> were obtained ( $M = 44.21 \pm 8.83$  per participant).

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<sup>1</sup> World Cup competitions are governed by the FIE rules for competitions. World Cups are organised according to a mixed system consisting of one round of pools and a preliminary direct elimination table, followed by a main direct elimination table of 64 fencers.

<sup>2</sup> The stress thermometer (Kowalski & Crocker, 2001) was used to assess how much stress athletes had experienced during their match. It consists of a one-item scale ranging from 0 "not at all stressful" to 10 "extremely stressful". Results provided evidence about stress perceptions associated with the matches ( $M = 7.29 \pm 1.68$ ).

<sup>3</sup> The number of momentary assessments varies according to the score of the match. You win a match by being first to score 15 touches.

1           Firstly, the research assistant issued instructions verbally and handed each athlete  
2 a document summing up the purpose of the study, the procedure-related instructions, and  
3 the measures. Participants read the measures and could ask the research assistant  
4 questions to clarify the meaning of words and expressions used to define/measure the  
5 psychological processes. A single-item definitional approach (Ptacek, Smith, Espe, &  
6 Raffety, 1994; Raffety, Smith, & Ptacek, 1997) was used to measure the psychological  
7 processes. In the definitional approach, which has been used in other studies on coping  
8 (e.g., Doron & Gaudreau, 2014; Doron & Martinent, 2015; Ptacek et al., 1994; Raffety et  
9 al., 1997; Smith & Christensen, 1995), the key conceptual features of a construct are  
10 summarized into a brief paragraph on which participants are asked to provide a single  
11 rating. Previous research has demonstrated the convergent validity of definitional  
12 measures of coping and shown the usefulness of this approach for collecting data in  
13 longitudinal intensive designs (Ptacek et al., 1994). In this study, each definitional item  
14 was created using definitions used in previous studies (e.g., Doron & Gaudreau, 2014;  
15 Doron & Martinent, 2015; see Table 1).

16           Secondly, athletes learned how to apply the scales measuring the psychological  
17 processes using the Dartfish© tagging panel. Thirdly, they watched their match. Between  
18 each of the points, they had to assess and assign a score individually to threat and  
19 challenge appraisals, task-oriented and disengagement-oriented coping, and positive and  
20 negative emotions. They input their score<sup>4</sup> immediately after each point using the  
21 Dartfish© tagging panel. Thus, data were obtained using multiple assessments of

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<sup>4</sup>Score range was: losing point (1), losing off-target (2), simultaneous (3), winning off-target (4), winning point (5)

1 psychological processes, rated on a six-point Likert scale, ranging from 0 (*not at all*) to 5  
2 (*very much*), immediately after each point and over the entire match.

### 3 **Data analysis**

4 To investigate the relationships between the study variables – cognitive appraisal  
5 (threat and challenge), coping (disengagement- and task-oriented), emotions (positive and  
6 negative) and performance – a Hierarchical Linear Modelling approach (HLM; Bryk &  
7 Raudenbush, 1992) was used in the present study. All analyses were conducted using the  
8 R package labelled lme4 (Bates, Maechler, Bolker, & Walker, 2014). Since time-series  
9 data violate the assumption that residual effects are independent, level-1 models were  
10 developed that accounted for the residual autocorrelation in the data (Fullagar, Knight, &  
11 Sovern, 2013). Group mean centering was used for all (level 1) predictors based on the  
12 rationale that grand-mean centering or no centering may produce biased point estimates  
13 of the mediation effect (Zhang, Zyphur, & Preacher, 2009). To examine within-individual  
14 (level-1) relationships between the study variables, a series of HLM was performed in  
15 which: (a) appraisal, coping, and emotions were separately regressed onto performance;  
16 (b) appraisal and coping were separately regressed onto emotions; and (c) appraisal was  
17 regressed onto coping. In order to further test our hypotheses and to ascertain more  
18 precisely the mediation effects between the study variables, a further series of HLM was  
19 performed, in which: (a) appraisal, coping, and emotions were simultaneously regressed  
20 onto performance; and (b) appraisal and coping were simultaneously regressed onto  
21 emotions. A series of Sobel tests (Sobel, 1982) was also used to test whether: (a)  
22 disengagement-oriented coping mediates the relationship between threat and negative  
23 emotions; (b) task-oriented coping mediates the relationship between challenge and

1 positive emotions; (c) disengagement-oriented coping and negative emotions mediate the  
2 relationship between threat appraisal and performance; and (d) task-oriented coping and  
3 positive emotions mediate the relationship between challenge appraisal and performance.

#### 4 **Results**

5 Before proceeding to test the hypotheses, we analysed the systematic within- and  
6 between-individual variance in momentary study variables. The results of the null models  
7 (see Table 2) indicated that there was substantial within- and between-individual variance  
8 for all the variables ( $\sigma^2$  ranged from .81 to 2.71;  $\tau_{00}$  ranged from .05 to 1.03). The  
9 intraclass correlations ( $ICC = \tau_{00} / (\sigma^2 + \tau_{00})$ ) for the study variables ranged from .02 to  
10 .53, indicating that between-individual variance accounts for 2 to 53% percent of the total  
11 variance in the study variables. This would suggest that between 47 and 98% of the  
12 overall variance (both systematic and error) is attributable to within-individual variation,  
13 suggesting that study variables vary considerably from situation to situation.

14 We then tested whether individuals' coping, emotion, and performance ratings  
15 were randomly distributed or serially dependent (Fullagar et al., 2013)<sup>5</sup>. Lagged  
16 parameters were found to be significant predictors of coping (task-oriented coping:  $\gamma_{10} =$   
17  $.29, p < .001$ ; disengagement-oriented coping:  $\gamma_{10} = .33, p < .001$ ) and emotion (negative  
18 emotions:  $\gamma_{10} = .42, p < .001$ ; positive emotions:  $\gamma_{10} = .44, p < .001$ ) but not of  
19 performance ( $\gamma_{10} = .02, p > .05$ ) (see Table 3). Since time-series data violate the

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<sup>5</sup> It is noteworthy that the random effect of the lagged parameter was included in the emotion models because the addition of this parameter provided a significant improvement to the model as indexed by the chi square tests ( $\Delta \chi^2 (2) = 54.73$  and  $21.28$  for negative and positive emotions respectively,  $p < .001$ ), whereas it was not included within the coping ( $\Delta \chi^2 (2) = 3.40$  and  $1.68$  for task- and disengagement-oriented coping respectively,  $p > .10$ ) and performance ( $\Delta \chi^2 (2) = 1.17, p > .10$ ) models.

1 assumption that residual effects are independent, all subsequent models controlled for  
2 lagged effects.

3 In order to test the relationships between the study variables, we ran a series of  
4 random coefficient regression models controlling for lagged effects. The results of these  
5 analyses are presented in Tables 4, 5 and 6. When challenge and threat appraisals were  
6 simultaneously entered as predictors of coping, emotion and performance in the random  
7 coefficient regression models, the regression coefficients of challenge and threat were  
8 significantly different from zero (after controlling for lagged effects) for predicting task-  
9 oriented coping ( $\beta = .85$  and  $-.32$  for challenge and threat respectively,  $p < .001$ ),  
10 disengagement-oriented coping ( $\beta = -.48$  and  $.39$ ,  $p < .001$ ), negative emotions ( $\beta = -.29$   
11 and  $.34$ ,  $p < .001$ ), positive emotions ( $\beta = .64$  for challenge,  $p < .001$ ), and performance  
12 ( $\beta = .73$  and  $-.42$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Hence, the direction of the regression coefficients supported  
13 Hypothesis 1.

14 When task-oriented and disengagement-oriented coping were simultaneously  
15 entered as predictors of emotion and performance in the random coefficient regression  
16 models, the results of the regression coefficients showed that: (a) task-oriented coping  
17 significantly predicted positive emotion ( $\beta = .37$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and performance ( $\beta = .56$ ,  $p <$   
18  $.001$ ); and (b) disengagement-oriented coping significantly predicted negative emotion ( $\beta$   
19  $= .38$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and performance ( $\beta = -.44$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Thus, the direction of the  
20 regression coefficients supported Hypothesis 2.

21 In order to test the mediational effect of coping on the appraisal-emotion  
22 relationship, we computed two further random coefficient regression models, in which  
23 perceived challenge, perceived threat, and task-oriented and disengagement-oriented

1 coping were simultaneously entered as predictors of negative emotions and positive  
2 emotions (see Table 5). In addition to the aforementioned significant relationship  
3 between threat and disengagement-oriented coping ( $\beta = .39, p < .001$ ), results also  
4 showed that the relationship between threat and negative emotions decreased from .34 ( $p$   
5  $< .001$ ) to .23 ( $p < .001$ ) when disengagement-oriented coping was entered additionally  
6 as a predictor of negative emotions ( $\beta = .29, p < .001$ ). This suggests that disengagement-  
7 oriented coping partially mediated the relationship between threat and negative emotions  
8 (Sobel test = 2.99,  $p = .003$ ). Similarly, in addition to the aforementioned significant  
9 relationship between challenge and task-oriented coping ( $\beta = .85, p < .001$ ), results also  
10 showed that the relationship between challenge and positive emotions decreased from .64  
11 ( $p < .001$ ) to .32 ( $p < .001$ ) when task-oriented coping was added as a predictor of  
12 positive emotions ( $\beta = .24, p < .01$ ). This suggests that task-oriented coping partially  
13 mediated the relationship between challenge and positive emotions (Sobel test = 2.93,  $p =$   
14  $.003$ ). In summary, the present results supported hypothesis 3.

15 In order to test the mediational effects of emotion and coping on the appraisal-  
16 performance relationship, we computed two further random coefficient regression  
17 models, in which: (a) perceived challenge, perceived threat, and task-oriented and  
18 disengagement-oriented coping were simultaneously entered as predictors of  
19 performance; and (b) perceived challenge, perceived threat, and positive and negative  
20 emotions were simultaneously entered as predictors of performance (see Table 6). In  
21 addition to the aforementioned significant relationships between threat and  
22 disengagement-oriented coping ( $\beta = .39, p < .001$ ), results moreover showed that the  
23 relationship between threat and performance decreased from -.42 ( $p < .001$ ) to -.09 ( $p >$



1 .05) when disengagement-oriented coping was also entered as a predictor of performance  
2 ( $\beta = -.39, p < .001$ ), suggesting that disengagement-oriented coping mediated the  
3 relationship between threat and performance (Sobel test =  $-3.24, p = .001$ ). In contrast,  
4 results of the random coefficient regression models controlling for lagged effects showed  
5 that when negative emotions and threat appraisal were simultaneously entered as  
6 predictors of performance, the effect of negative emotions on performance was non-  
7 significant ( $\beta = -.20, p > .05$ ), suggesting that negative emotions did not mediate the  
8 relationship between threat appraisal and performance (Sobel test =  $-1.39, p = .17$ ).

9 Further to the aforementioned significant relationships between challenge and  
10 task-oriented coping ( $\beta = .85, p < .001$ ), results also showed that the relationship between  
11 challenge and performance decreased from  $.73 (p < .001)$  to  $.25 (p < .05)$  when task-  
12 oriented coping was added as a predictor of performance ( $\beta = .45, p < .001$ ). This  
13 suggests that task-oriented coping partially mediated the relationship between challenge  
14 and performance (Sobel test =  $3.99, p < .001$ ). Similarly, in addition to the  
15 aforementioned significant relationships between challenge and positive emotions ( $\beta =$   
16  $.64, p < .001$ ), results showed that the relationship between challenge and performance  
17 decreased from  $.73 (p < .001)$  to  $.52 (p < .001)$  when positive emotions were also entered  
18 as a predictor of performance ( $\beta = .36, p < .001$ ), suggesting that positive emotions  
19 partially mediated the relationship between challenge and performance (Sobel test =  $2.33,$   
20  $p = .02$ ). Overall, results of the random coefficient regression models controlling for  
21 lagged effects partially supported hypothesis 4.

22

## Discussion

1 Grounded in Lazarus's (1991, 1999, 2000) CMRT of emotion, the current  
2 research set out to gain insight into the relationship between the constructs central to the  
3 CMRT of emotion and performance over the course of an international fencing match.  
4 Specifically, this study aimed to determine the relationships between cognitive appraisal,  
5 coping, emotion and objective performance within a match during real high-level  
6 competition.

7 Firstly, the results showed a positive relationship between challenge appraisal,  
8 task-oriented coping, positive emotions, and performance, as well as for threat appraisal,  
9 disengagement-oriented coping and negative emotions. Conversely, challenge appraisal,  
10 disengagement-oriented coping and negative emotions were negatively correlated, as  
11 were threat appraisal, task-oriented coping and performance. Using a different  
12 methodological approach, our results were similar to those observed in Nicholls et al.  
13 (2012, 2014), with the exception that they took into account objective performance and  
14 the recursive nature of these constructs. The patterns of results highlighted distinct  
15 positive and negative dynamic relationships between these constructs and their link with  
16 objective performance during high-level competitions. The relationship between these  
17 constructs as they are experienced by athletes in matches seems important for the  
18 objective performance (Doron & Gaudreau, 2014; Doron & Martinent, 2015). Overall,  
19 these constructs, as a conceptual unit, can be seen to reflect self-regulatory processes that  
20 provide an individual with the capacity to modulate thoughts, emotions, and behaviours  
21 over time and across changing environments (e.g., Compas et al., 2001). Specifically,  
22 through challenge appraisals, pleasant emotions and task-oriented coping strategies,  
23 athletes may have a broader attention on the task at hand which may result in more

1 flexible and creative thinking (Fredrickson, 2001). Greater flexibility and creativity,  
2 according to Fredrickson (2001), should result in more effective coping. As such, the  
3 transient allocation of self-regulatory resources toward or away from the task at hand  
4 seemed respectively to facilitate or hinder a person's level of achievement in a specific  
5 performance situation, here a fencing world cup match (Gaudreau et al., 2010). As such,  
6 it appears that athletes who perform better may be more efficient self-regulators (e.g.,  
7 Kitsantas & Zimmerman, 2002).

8         In addition, the findings provided a more detailed analysis of the relationship  
9 between the psychological constructs and performance in a specific sport performance  
10 situation. Results showed that athletes' task-oriented coping strategies act as a partial  
11 mediator of relationships between challenge appraisal and positive emotions, whereas  
12 disengagement-oriented coping strategies act as a partial mediator of relationships  
13 between threat appraisal and negative emotions. This study extended the work of Nicholls  
14 et al. (2012; 2014) by examining the mediating role of coping. Although, Nicholls et al.  
15 (2014) provided support for the mediating role of emotion in the relationship between  
16 appraisal and coping, our results found also support for the mediating role of coping  
17 (Lazarus, 1999, 2000). As such, coping strategies may influence the emotions a fencer  
18 experiences during match and may mediate the relationship between appraisal and the  
19 subsequent level of emotional states (Lazarus, 1999, 2000). Challenge and threat  
20 relational meanings generated respectively positive or negative emotions through the  
21 ways of coping in specific sport performance situations (international matches).  
22 Specifically, challenge appraisal and task-oriented coping appear to be linked to better

1 emotional adjustment during a competitive event (Gaudreau & Blondin, 2004; Nicholls et  
2 al., 2010).

3 Furthermore, this study also aimed to ascertain whether the relationship between  
4 appraisal and objective performance was mediated by emotion and coping. The results  
5 showed that disengagement-oriented coping mediated the relationship between threat and  
6 performance, whereas task-oriented coping and positive emotions (partially) mediated the  
7 relationship between challenge and performance. While the relationships between  
8 subjective sporting performance and cognitive appraisal, coping, and emotion have been  
9 explored previously (e.g., Nicholls et al. 2012), our results provided a deeper  
10 understanding of the overall sequence of the constructs central to the CMRT of emotion  
11 and their links with performance over the course of an international fencing match.  
12 Because Nicholls et al. (2012, 2014) did not explore the mediating effects of coping and  
13 emotions, these authors may have missed some key relationships, which were identified  
14 in the present study. In accordance with previous research (e.g., Calmeiro et al., 2010,  
15 2014; Doron & Gaudreau, 2014; Doron & Martinent, 2015; Gaudreau et al., 2010; Haney  
16 & Long, 1995; Nicholls et al., 2010, 2012; Smith & Christensen, 1995), the present study  
17 also supported the notion that task-oriented coping is associated with more effective  
18 coping than are disengagement-oriented strategies regarding performance. In addition,  
19 positive emotions seem to facilitate adaptive coping by counteracting the effects of  
20 negative emotions (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005). In line with Lazarus's (1991, 1999,  
21 2000) recommendations, our findings indicated that stress, coping, and emotion are inter-  
22 related psychological constructs that should not be examined in isolation when exploring  
23 the way elite athletes perform and cope with the various demands of sport performance

1 situations. The ways these constructs are inter-related influence objective performance  
2 within competitive settings.

3 A limitation of this paper related to the exclusion of stress appraisals of harm and benefit,  
4 and distraction-oriented coping strategies. Future research should expand the definitional  
5 approach by including the four stress appraisals and distraction-oriented coping in order  
6 to more reflect the key psychological constructs of the CMRT of emotion. In addition, the  
7 use of a delayed retrospective video recall method might lead to a potential memory bias  
8 in the point-by-point measures of psychological constructs (Stone et al., 1998). The  
9 athletes have potentially confounded psychological constructs elicited by reviewing the  
10 match and psychological constructs experienced at the time of the competition.

11 Immediate retrospective recall could potentially reduce this bias (Evans et al., 2014).  
12 Although Lazarus (2000) advocated the implementation of process-oriented methods, a  
13 weakness of this study is that the participant sample was small. Samples of elite athletes  
14 are inherently homogeneous, thus limiting the generalizability of findings. Nevertheless,  
15 the present research replicated Doron and Martinent's (2015) study design using another  
16 sample group (i.e., foil fencers) and added information about the relationship between  
17 psychological states and performance over the course of a match. Moreover, as Nicholls  
18 et al. (2012) suggested, experimental research could in future be used to provide clear  
19 evidence for the causality between appraisal, emotion, coping, and performance.

## 20 **Perspectives**

21 Through the implementation of an original process-oriented method and statistical  
22 approach, this study provided additional support for Lazarus's (1991, 1999, 2000)  
23 contention that the key constructs of the CMRT of emotion are intertwined in a dynamic

1 relationship and form a conceptual unit within competitive sport settings. This study also  
2 helped to increase researches' interest in examining the micro-analytical aspects of  
3 transactional processes during sport performance situations and their links with  
4 performance (e.g., Calmeiro et al., 2010, 2014; Doron & Gaudreau, 2014; Doron &  
5 Martinent, 2015; Evans et al., 2014; Gaudreau et al., 2010). It is important from both  
6 theoretical and applied perspectives that researchers and practitioners have a greater  
7 understanding of the overall experience of athletes in stressful competitions, in order to  
8 develop theory-guided interventions (Nicholls et al., 2010). As such, "video-mediated  
9 recall may be used qualitatively in applied interventions designed to establish athletes'  
10 awareness of cognitive, emotional and behavioural processes" (Evans et al., 2014, p.  
11 374). Sport psychologists may wish to teach athletes to (re)appraise the ongoing match as  
12 series of challenges for which they can then develop effective coping strategies.

13

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Table 1.

*Definition of psychological processes*

<b>Threat appraisal</b>	Appraisal of a potential for loss.
<b>Challenge appraisal</b>	Appraisal of an anticipated gain (difficult to attain).
<b>Task-oriented coping</b>	Task-oriented coping represents strategies aimed at dealing directly with a match situation or at solving a problem you are facing in a match. It includes efforts to concentrate, to seek information or advice from the training staff, to analyse the point, to manage your time in a point, to enhance your effort, to manage your goals, to identify solutions, to create and use a plan of action to make your actions more efficient, efforts to relax, reinterpret the situation in a positive way, seek social support to emotional reasoning, etc.
<b>Disengagement-oriented coping</b>	Disengagement-oriented coping represents the strategies through which a person withdraws from the process of actively striving toward the realization of desirable outcomes, including strategies such as mental and behavioural disengagement, denial, venting of unpleasant emotions, self-blame, blame of others, etc.
<b>Positive Affects</b>	Interested, excited, strong, enthusiastic, proud, alert, inspired, determined, attentive, active, etc.
<b>Negative Affects</b>	Distressed, annoyed, scared, guilty, nervous, afraid, anxious, etc.

Table 2.

*Parameter Estimates and Variance Components of the Null models*

Model equations	Fixed effects	Random effects		-2*log likelihood
	$\gamma_{00}$ (SE)	$\sigma^2$ (SD)	$\tau_{00}$ (SD)	
Challenge <sub>ij</sub> = $\beta_{0j} + r_{ij}$	3.18*** (.22)	.81 (.90)	.68 (.82)	1679.4
Threat <sub>ij</sub> = $\beta_{0j} + r_{ij}$	1.83*** (.22)	.83 (.91)	.68 (.82)	1689.7
Task-oriented coping <sub>ij</sub> = $\beta_{0j} + r_{ij}$	3.24*** (.19)	1.56 (1.25)	.47 (.68)	2064.4
Disengagement-oriented coping <sub>ij</sub> = $\beta_{0j} + r_{ij}$	1.69*** (.20)	1.28 (1.13)	.52 (.72)	1950.9
Negative emotion <sub>ij</sub> = $\beta_{0j} + r_{ij}$	2.12*** (.27)	1.37 (1.17)	1.03 (1.01)	1999.6
Positive emotion <sub>ij</sub> = $\beta_{0j} + r_{ij}$	3.19*** (.23)	1.08 (1.04)	.74 (.86)	1850.3
Self-confidence for touch <sub>ij</sub> = $\beta_{0j} + r_{ij}$	3.32*** (.22)	.57 (.75)	.65 (.81)	1462.4
Self-confidence for match <sub>ij</sub> = $\beta_{0j} + r_{ij}$	3.17*** (.26)	.88 (.94)	.94 (.97)	1730.1
Performance <sub>ij</sub> = $\beta_{0j} + r_{ij}$	3.08*** (.09)	2.71 (1.65)	.05 (.23)	2278.7
$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + U_{0j}$				

Note. SE = Standard errors; SD = Standard deviations;  $\beta_{0j}$  is the average level of psychological states for individuals;  $\gamma_{00}$  is the group mean of psychological state scores;  $\sigma^2 = \text{var}(r_{ij})$  variance in level-1 residual (i.e. variance in  $r_{ij}$ );  $\tau_{00} = \text{var}(U_{0j})$  variance in level-2 residual (i.e. variance in  $U_{0j}$ ). \*  $p < .001$ .

Table 3.

*Parameter Estimates and Variance Components of the Serial Dependent Models*

Model equations	Fixed effects		Random effects			-2*log likelihood
	$\gamma_{00}$ (SE)	$\gamma_{10}$ (SE)	$\sigma^2$ (SD)	$\tau_{00}$ (SD)	$\tau_{11}$ (SD)	
Task-oriented coping <sub>ij</sub> = $\beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}$ (Task-oriented coping <sub>ij,t-1</sub> ) + $r_{ij}$	3.24*** (.19)	.29*** (.04)	1.44 (1.20)	.47 (.69)	–	1976.0
Disengagement-oriented coping <sub>ij</sub> = $\beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}$ (Disengagement-oriented coping <sub>ij,t-1</sub> ) + $r_{ij}$	1.70*** (.20)	.33*** (.04)	1.15 (1.07)	.53 (.73)	–	1844.0
Negative emotion <sub>ij</sub> = $\beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}$ (Negative emotion <sub>ij,t-1</sub> ) + $r_{ij}$	2.14*** (.28)	.42*** (.08)	.92 (.96)	1.06 (1.02)	.08 (.28)	1730.2
Positive emotion <sub>ij</sub> = $\beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}$ (Positive emotion <sub>ij,t-1</sub> ) + $r_{ij}$	3.18*** (.24)	.44*** (.07)	.77 (.88)	.76 (.87)	.05 (.22)	1626.2
Performance <sub>ij</sub> = $\beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}$ (Performance <sub>ij,t-1</sub> ) + $r_{ij}$	3.08*** (.10)	.02 (.04)	2.70 (1.64)	.07 (.26)	–	2147.1

$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + U_{0j}$ ;  $\beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10} + U_{1j}$  or  $\gamma_{10}$

Note. SE = Standard errors; SD = Standard deviations;  $\beta_{0j}$  is the average level of psychological states for individuals;  $\gamma_{00}$  = intercept of level-2 regression predicting  $\beta_{0j}$ ;  $\gamma_{10}$  = intercept of level-2 regression predicting  $\beta_{1j}$ ;  $\sigma^2 = \text{var}(r_{ij})$  variance in level-1 residual (i.e. variance in  $r_{ij}$ );  $\tau_{00} = \text{var}(U_{0j})$  variance in level-2 residual (i.e. variance in  $U_{0j}$ ). \*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$  \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Table 4.

*Results for the Random-Coefficient Regression Models of Task- and Disengagement-oriented Coping Controlling for Lagged Effects*

Model equations	Fixed effects				Random effects				-2*log likelihood
	$\gamma_{00}$ (SE)	$\gamma_{10}$ (SE)	$\gamma_{20}$ (SE)	$\gamma_{30}$ (SE)	$\sigma^2$ (SD)	$\tau_{00}$ (SD)	$\tau_{22}$ (SD)	$\tau_{33}$ (SD)	
Task-oriented coping <sub>ij</sub> = $\beta_{0j}$ + $\beta_{1j}$ (Task-oriented coping <sub>ij,t-1</sub> ) + $\beta_{2j}$ (Challenge <sub>ij</sub> ) + $\beta_{3j}$ (Threat <sub>ij</sub> ) + $r_{ij}$	3.24*** (.19)	.10*** (.03)	.85*** (.15)	-.32*** (.11)	.61 (.78)	.49 (.70)	.28 (.53)	.14 (.37)	1527.20
Disengagement-oriented coping <sub>ij</sub> = $\beta_{0j}$ + $\beta_{1j}$ (Disengagement-oriented coping <sub>ij,t-1</sub> ) + $\beta_{2j}$ (Challenge <sub>ij</sub> ) + $\beta_{3j}$ (Threat <sub>ij</sub> ) + $r_{ij}$	1.69*** (.20)	.11*** (.03)	-.48*** (.07)	.39*** (.09)	.61 (.78)	.53 (.72)	.04 (.21)	.08 (.28)	1504.6

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + U_{0j}; \beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10}; \beta_{2j} = \gamma_{20} + U_{2j}; \beta_{3j} = \gamma_{30} + U_{3j}$$

Note. SE = Standard errors; SD = Standard deviations;  $\gamma_{00}$  = intercept of level-2 regression predicting  $\beta_{0j}$ ;  $\gamma_{10}$ ,  $\gamma_{20}$  and  $\gamma_{30}$  = intercept of level-2 regression predicting  $\beta_{1j}$ ,  $\beta_{2j}$  and  $\beta_{3j}$ ;  $\sigma^2 = \text{var}(r_{ij})$  variance in level-1 residual (i.e. variance in  $r_{ij}$ );  $\tau_{00} = \text{var}(U_{0j})$  variance in level-2 residual (i.e. variance in  $U_{0j}$ );  $\tau_{22}$  and  $\tau_{33}$  = variance in level-2 residual for models predicting  $\beta_{2j}$  and  $\beta_{3j}$  (i.e. variance in  $U_{2j}$  and  $U_{3j}$ ). \*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$  \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .



Table 5.

*Results for the Random-Coefficient Regression Models of Positive and Negative Emotion Controlling for Lagged Effects*

	Fixed effects						Random effects						-2*log likelihood	
	$\gamma_{00}$ (SE)	$\gamma_{10}$ (SE)	$\gamma_{20}$ (SE)	$\gamma_{30}$ (SE)	$\gamma_{40}$ (SE)	$\gamma_{50}$ (SE)	$\sigma^2$ (SD)	$\tau_{00}$ (SD)	$\tau_{11}$ (SD)	$\tau_{22}$ (SD)	$\tau_{33}$ (SD)	$\tau_{44}$ (SD)	$\tau_{55}$ (SD)	
Model equations														
Negative emotion <sub>ij</sub> = $\beta_{0j}$ + $\beta_{1j}$ (Negative emotion <sub>ij,t-1</sub> ) + $\beta_{2j}$ (Challenge <sub>ij</sub> ) + $\beta_{3j}$ (Threat <sub>ij</sub> ) + $r_{ij}$	2.13*** (.28)	.30*** (.08)	-.29*** (.06)	.34*** (.06)	—	—	.72 (.85)	1.06 (1.03)	.07 (.26)	.02 (.16)	.03 (.16)	—	—	1607.0
Negative emotion <sub>ij</sub> = $\beta_{0j}$ + $\beta_{1j}$ (Negative emotion <sub>ij,t-1</sub> ) + $\beta_{2j}$ (Task-oriented coping <sub>ij</sub> ) + $\beta_{3j}$ (Disengagement-oriented coping <sub>ij</sub> ) + $r_{ij}$	2.13*** (.28)	.34*** (.08)	-.06 (.04)	.38*** (.07)	—	—	.69 (.83)	1.06 (1.03)	.07 (.27)	.00 (.06)	.05 (.22)	—	—	1574.2
Negative emotion <sub>ij</sub> = $\beta_{0j}$ + $\beta_{1j}$ (Negative emotion <sub>ij,t-1</sub> ) + $\beta_{2j}$ (Challenge <sub>ij</sub> ) + $\beta_{3j}$ (Threat <sub>ij</sub> ) + $\beta_{4j}$ (Task-oriented coping <sub>ij</sub> ) + $\beta_{5j}$ (Disengagement-oriented coping <sub>ij</sub> ) + $r_{ij}$	2.13*** (.28)	.30*** (.08)	-.12 <sup>‡</sup> (.06)	.23*** (.05)	.00 (.05)	.29*** (.07)	.65 (.80)	1.06 (1.03)	.07 (.26)	.01 (.11)	.01 (.10)	.01 (.09)	.04 (.20)	1543.9
Positive emotion <sub>ij</sub> = $\beta_{0j}$ + $\beta_{1j}$ (Positive emotion <sub>ij,t-1</sub> ) + $\beta_{2j}$ (Challenge <sub>ij</sub> ) + $\beta_{3j}$ (Threat <sub>ij</sub> ) + $r_{ij}$	3.19*** (.23)	.26*** (.05)	.64** (.21)	-.15 (.10)	—	—	.44 (.67)	.76 (.87)	.02 (.14)	.59 (.77)	.12 (.34)	—	—	1349.7

Positive emotion <sub>ij</sub> = $\beta_{0j}$ + $\beta_{1j}$ (Positive emotion <sub>ij,t-1</sub> ) + $\beta_{2j}$ (Task-oriented coping <sub>ij</sub> ) + $\beta_{3j}$ (Disengagement-oriented coping <sub>ij</sub> ) + $r_{ij}$	3.19***	.40***	.37***	-.11	–	–	.46	.76	.03	.06	.06	–	–	1359.5
	(.24)	(.06)	(.07)	(.08)			(.68)	(.87)	(.18)	(.24)	(.25)			
Positive emotion <sub>ij</sub> = $\beta_{0j}$ + $\beta_{1j}$ (Positive emotion <sub>ij,t-1</sub> ) + $\beta_{2j}$ (Challenge <sub>ij</sub> ) + $\beta_{3j}$ (Threat <sub>ij</sub> ) + $\beta_{4j}$ (Task-oriented coping <sub>ij</sub> ) + $\beta_{5j}$ (Emotion-oriented coping <sub>ij</sub> ) + $r_{ij}$	3.19***	.27***	.32***	-.05	.24**	-.03	.39	.76	.01	.09	.01	.06	.04	1281.3
	(.23)	(.04)	(.10)	(.04)	(.07)	(.06)	(.63)	(.87)	(.11)	(.30)	(.08)	(.24)	(.19)	
$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + U_{0j}$ ; $\beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10} + U_{1j}$ ; $\beta_{2j} = \gamma_{20} + U_{2j}$ ; $\beta_{3j} = \gamma_{30} + U_{3j}$ ; $\beta_{4j} = \gamma_{40} + U_{4j}$ ; $\beta_{5j} = \gamma_{50} + U_{5j}$														

Note. SE = Standard errors; SD = Standard deviations;  $\gamma_{00}$  = intercept of level-2 regression predicting  $\beta_{0j}$ ;  $\gamma_{10}$ ,  $\gamma_{20}$ ,  $\gamma_{30}$ ,  $\gamma_{40}$  and  $\gamma_{50}$  = intercept of level-2 regression predicting  $\beta_{1j}$ ,  $\beta_{2j}$ ,  $\beta_{3j}$ ,  $\beta_{4j}$  and  $\beta_{5j}$ ;  $\sigma^2 = \text{var}(r_{ij})$  variance in level-1 residual (i.e. variance in  $r_{ij}$ );  $\tau_{00} = \text{var}(U_{0j})$  variance in level-2 residual (i.e. variance in  $U_{0j}$ );  $\tau_{11}$ ,  $\tau_{22}$ ,  $\tau_{33}$ ,  $\tau_{44}$  and  $\tau_{55}$  = variance in level-2 residual for models predicting  $\beta_{1j}$ ,  $\beta_{2j}$ ,  $\beta_{3j}$ ,  $\beta_{4j}$  and  $\beta_{5j}$  (i.e. variance in  $U_{1j}$ ,  $U_{2j}$ ,  $U_{3j}$ ,  $U_{4j}$  and  $U_{5j}$ ). \*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$  \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Table 6.

Results for the Random-Coefficient Regression Models of Performance Controlling for Lagged Effects

Model equations	Fixed effects						Random effects								-2*log likelihood		
	$\gamma_{00}$ (SE)	$\gamma_{10}$ (SE)	$\gamma_{20}$ (SE)	$\gamma_{30}$ (SE)	$\gamma_{40}$ (SE)	$\gamma_{50}$ (SE)	$\gamma_{60}$ (SE)	$\gamma_{70}$ (SE)	$\sigma^2$ (SD)	$\tau_{00}$ (SD)	$\tau_{22}$ (SD)	$\tau_{33}$ (SD)	$\tau_{44}$ (SD)	$\tau_{55}$ (SD)		$\tau_{66}$ (SD)	$\tau_{77}$ (SD)
Performance <sub>ij</sub> = $\beta_{0j}$ + $\beta_{1j}$ (Performance <sub>ij,t-1</sub> ) + $\beta_{2j}$ (Challenge <sub>ij</sub> ) + $\beta_{3j}$ (Threat <sub>ij</sub> ) + $r_{ij}$	3.08*** (.09)	-.08* (.04)	.73*** (.14)	-.42*** (.09)	—	—	—	—	1.81 (1.34)	.08 (.28)	.16 (.40)	.03 (.16)	—	—	—	—	1941.8
Performance <sub>ij</sub> = $\beta_{0j}$ + $\beta_{1j}$ (Performance <sub>ij,t-1</sub> ) + $\beta_{2j}$ (Task-oriented coping <sub>ij</sub> ) + $\beta_{3j}$ (Disengagement-oriented coping <sub>ij</sub> ) + $r_{ij}$	3.08*** (.10)	-.08* (.03)	.56*** (.06)	-.44*** (.08)	—	—	—	—	1.60 (1.27)	.08 (.29)	.00 (.05)	.04 (.21)	—	—	—	—	1873.4
Performance <sub>ij</sub> = $\beta_{0j}$ + $\beta_{1j}$ (Performance <sub>ij,t-1</sub> ) + $\beta_{2j}$ (Negative emotion <sub>ij</sub> ) + $\beta_{3j}$ (Positive emotion <sub>ij</sub> ) + $r_{ij}$	3.09*** (.09)	-.07 (.04)	-.32* (.15)	.65*** (.10)	—	—	—	—	1.88 (1.37)	.06 (.25)	.25 (.50)	.07 (.26)	—	—	—	—	1969.6
Performance <sub>ij</sub> = $\beta_{0j}$ + $\beta_{1j}$ (Performance <sub>ij,t-1</sub> ) + $\beta_{2j}$ (Challenge <sub>ij</sub> ) + $\beta_{3j}$ (Threat <sub>ij</sub> ) + $\beta_{4j}$ (Task-oriented coping <sub>ij</sub> ) + $\beta_{5j}$ (Disengagement-oriented coping <sub>ij</sub> ) + $r_{ij}$	3.08*** (.09)	-.09** (.03)	.25* (.11)	-.09 (.09)	.45*** (.08)	-.39*** (.08)	—	—	1.55 (1.24)	.07 (.27)	.07 (.27)	.05 (.22)	.02 (.16)	.01 (.12)	—	—	1858.8

+ $r_{ij}$

Performance<sub>ij</sub> =  $\beta_{0j}$  +  $\beta_{1j}$

(Performance <sub>ij,t-1</sub> ) + $\beta_{2j}$	3.09***	-.10**	.52***	-.29**	-.20	.36***			1.53	.07	.14	.03	.23	.04			1873.2
(Challenge <sub>ij</sub> ) + $\beta_{3j}$ (Threat <sub>ij</sub> ) + $\beta_{4j}$	(.09)	(.03)	(.14)	(.09)	(.14)	(.10)	-	-	(1.24)	(.27)	(.38)	(.16)	(.48)	(.20)	-	-	
(Negative emotion <sub>ij</sub> ) + $\beta_{5j}$																	

(Positive emotion<sub>ij</sub>) +  $r_{ij}$

Performance<sub>ij</sub> =  $\beta_{0j}$  +  $\beta_{1j}$

(Performance <sub>ij,t-1</sub> ) + $\beta_{2j}$																	
(Challenge <sub>ij</sub> ) + $\beta_{3j}$ (Threat <sub>ij</sub> ) + $\beta_{4j}$	3.08***	-.10**	.18	-.09	.35***	-.30***	-.15	.28***	1.33	.08	.14	.03	.03	.01	.21	.01	1801.3
(Task-oriented coping <sub>ij</sub> ) + $\beta_{5j}$	(.09)	(.03)	(.14)	(.09)	(.08)	(.07)	(.14)	(.08)	(1.15)	(.29)	(.38)	(.17)	(.17)	(.11)	(.46)	(.11)	
(Disengagement-oriented coping <sub>ij</sub> )																	

+  $\beta_{6j}$  (Negative emotion<sub>ij</sub>) +  $\beta_{7j}$

(Positive emotion<sub>ij</sub>) +  $r_{ij}$

$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + U_{0j}$ ;  $\beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10}$ ;  $\beta_{2j} = \gamma_{20} + U_{2j}$ ;  $\beta_{3j} = \gamma_{30} + U_{3j}$ ;  $\beta_{4j} = \gamma_{40} + U_{4j}$ ;  $\beta_{5j} = \gamma_{50} + U_{5j}$ ;  $\beta_{6j} = \gamma_{60} + U_{6j}$ ;  $\beta_{7j} = \gamma_{70} + U_{7j}$

Note. SE = Standard errors; SD = Standard deviations;  $\gamma_{00}$  = intercept of level-2 regression predicting  $\beta_{0j}$ ;  $\gamma_{10}$ ,  $\gamma_{20}$ ,  $\gamma_{30}$ ,  $\gamma_{40}$ ,  $\gamma_{50}$ ,  $\gamma_{60}$  and  $\gamma_{70}$  = intercept of level-2 regression predicting  $\beta_{1j}$ ,  $\beta_{2j}$ ,  $\beta_{3j}$ ,  $\beta_{4j}$ ,  $\beta_{5j}$ ,  $\beta_{6j}$  and  $\beta_{7j}$ ;  $\sigma^2 = \text{var}(r_{ij})$  variance in level-1 residual (i.e. variance in  $r_{ij}$ );  $\tau_{00} = \text{var}(U_{0j})$  variance in level-2 residual (i.e. variance in  $U_{0j}$ );  $\tau_{22}$ ,  $\tau_{33}$ ,  $\tau_{44}$ ,  $\tau_{55}$ ,  $\tau_{66}$  and  $\tau_{77}$  = variance in level-2 residual for models predicting  $\beta_{2j}$ ,  $\beta_{3j}$ ,  $\beta_{4j}$ ,  $\beta_{5j}$ ,  $\beta_{6j}$  and  $\beta_{7j}$  (i.e. variance in  $U_{2j}$ ,  $U_{3j}$ ,  $U_{4j}$ ,  $U_{5j}$ ,  $U_{6j}$  and  $U_{7j}$ ). \*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$  \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .