

An analysis of factors impacting Division I basketball player's NIL value

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Abstract

In 2021 the NCAA adopted an interim name, image, and likeness (NIL) policy that allowed student-athletes to be compensated for their NIL (Hosick, 2021). The sudden implementation of the NIL policy altered the landscape of the NCAA. Previously, athletes were prohibited from receiving NIL compensation. With the newly adopted NIL policy, little is known about factors that may contribute to a student-athletes NIL evaluation. Informed by Goffman's (1959) theory of self-presentation, the purpose of this study is to examine the NIL values of NCAA Power 5 men's and women's basketball student-athletes. Specifically, the following hypotheses were addressed. First, there will be a statistically significant positive relationship between a student athletes' respective number of social media followers and their NIL values. Second, the mean of male student-athletes' NIL values will be statistically significantly higher than the mean of female student-athletes' NIL values. Finally, College athletes' Instagram followers will be a stronger predictor of their respective NIL values compared to Director's cup points, sex of the athletes, and number of postseason appearances respective to each athlete.

The study included 906 (female = 408; male = 498) college basketball players competing in the Power Five conferences: Southeastern Conference (SEC), To Pacific Athletic Conference (PAC-12), Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC), Big Ten, and Big 12. To be included in this study, the student-athlete must be a Power 5 Division I men's or women's basketball player in the 2022-2023 academic year and have a profile with an NIL value on the ON3 or Postgame platforms. The data collected included sex, race, school, conference, position, directors cup total points, directors cup final rank, Instagram followers, Postgame NIL, ON3 NIL values, if the team made it to the 2023 NCAA tournament, and how many games were played.

Data analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS version 29.0. More specifically, the first hypothesis was tested using a Pearson bivariate correlation analysis while the second hypothesis was tested using an independent samples t-test. The third hypothesis was tested using hierarchical multiple regression analysis with two models. It was determined that there is a strong positive correlation between social media followers of athletes and their NIL values. Results also showed that the mean for male college athletes' NIL values ($M = 6554.04$, $SD = 12,762.20$) was statistically significantly higher than the mean for female college athletes' NIL values ($M = 3124.90$, $SD = 9111.80$), $t(904) = 4.70$, $p < .001$. Finally, according to the results

from data collection, number of Instagram followers does have a statistically significant correlation with NIL value compared to no significant correlation between NIL value and post-season appearance. There was no relationship between NIL values when compared to postseason play, winning success, and directors cup rank and final points.

Based on results, future research should focus on what factors impact NIL earnings through social media. Future research should also determine how media presence is determined beyond followers. Is it the content posted, the popularity of the person, or the school of which the person attends? Other implications of future research include determining the difference of access to NIL deals between male and female student athletes.