

# Name, Image, and Likeness's Effect on NCAA Team Cohesion

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## Introduction

- The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) introduced Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) deals on July 1, 2021, permitting college athletes to earn money while preserving their athletic eligibility (The Annual OPENDORSE Report 2024).
- This research examines the effect of NIL on how student-athletes spend their time and view themselves as members of their team.
- Previous studies suggest these effects are dependent on the sport's marketability, the athlete's gender, and the financial value of the deals (Bredikhina 2025).
- Results indicate NIL deals have minimal impact on athlete time allocation and team cohesion in smaller market sports, while the effects on athletes in larger market sports remain inconclusive, indicating further research is needed.

## Methods

To gather real-world data, we curated an IRB-approved Qualtrics survey. The survey was distributed by a member of the Florida State University Student-Athlete Advisory Committee Executive Board, who sent the survey description and link to delegates of each team at the institution. The delegates then distributed the survey to their teammates and encouraged participation.

### Survey Contents:

The survey began by asking about the participants' sport, team role, and NIL opportunities received. Then, participants indicated how much time they typically spend per week on athletic activities, academic activities, social media curation, and NIL appearances. Then, participants were asked to think of their teammates, one who has or does receive NIL compensation, and one who doesn't, and how much time each of those teammates spends on the same activities. The survey concludes with two exploratory questions regarding the participants' identity within their team.

### Incentive Method:

We used the Krupka-Weber method to incentivize deeper thought throughout survey participation (Krupka and Weber 2013). The five athletes whose responses about their teammates' time allocation most closely match their teammates' actual responses receive a \$100 donation made in their name to a charity of their choice.

## Results

- No clear relationship between NIL and time allocation: Among respondents from smaller-market women's sports, NIL participation was not associated with major differences in time spent on athletic, academic, social media, or NIL appearance activities.
- Most respondents reported no change in team roles or identity related to NIL, though a small number suggested that NIL opportunities may influence individual behavior or communication with teammates.

**Important limitation:** These findings are based on a small sample (n = 6), with five respondents from the same team, and therefore should not be interpreted as representative of broader collegiate athletics or as evidence for a causal relationship between NIL and these factors.

How many hours do you usually spend on athletic-related activities per week? (in hours)

Participant	NIL-receiving	Non NIL-Receiving
38.01-45		38.01-45
45+	45+	45+
38.01-45	45+	25-32
32.01-38	32.01-38	32.01-38
25-32		25-32
25-32	25-32	25-32

How many hours do you usually spend on academic-related activities per week?

Participant	NIL-receiving	Non NIL-Receiving
<25		<25
25-32	<25	25-32
<25	<25	38.01-45
<25	<25	<25
<25	<25	<25
25-32	25-32	<25

How many hours do you usually spend developing your social media pages per week?

Participant	NIL-receiving	Non NIL-Receiving
<1		1-4
<1	<1	<1
<1	4.01-7	<1
<1	1-4	<1
7.01-10	4.01-7	1-4
<1	1-4	4.01-7

How many hours do you usually spend on NIL appearances per week?

Participant	NIL-receiving
<1	
<1	<1
<1	2.01-3
<1	<1
<1	<1
<1	<1

## Conclusions

No significant relationship was observed between Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) compensation and student-athlete time allocation or team cohesion among respondents from small-market women's sports. However, the sample size was small (n = 6) and consisted primarily of participants from a single athletic team. As a result, these findings should not be interpreted as evidence of a causal relationship, nor as representative of sports in which NIL activity is more prominent, such as football or men's basketball (The Annual OPENDORSE Report, 2024).

Future research should explore more effective methods of survey distribution or participant incentivization to increase response rates and improve representation across teams and sports. Additionally, expanding survey distribution to athletes at other universities, including those in smaller divisions and different conferences, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of NIL's impact.

## References

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