



# PAID TO PLAY

SHOULD COLLEGE ATHLETES BE PAID TO PLAY SPORTS?

JANUARY 2015

# SUMMARY OF KEY LEARNINGS

We wondered what the general population's perceptions were on paying college athletes, so we reached out with one simple question to 750 Americans to hear their thoughts:

## Q: HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT COLLEGE ATHLETES BEING PAID TO PLAY SPORTS?

Regardless of their opinion, consumers universally agree that college athletes are already given a great deal between scholarships, stipends, and free tuitions. The perception, although false, is that most college athletes receive their college education at a significant discount, if not completely free.

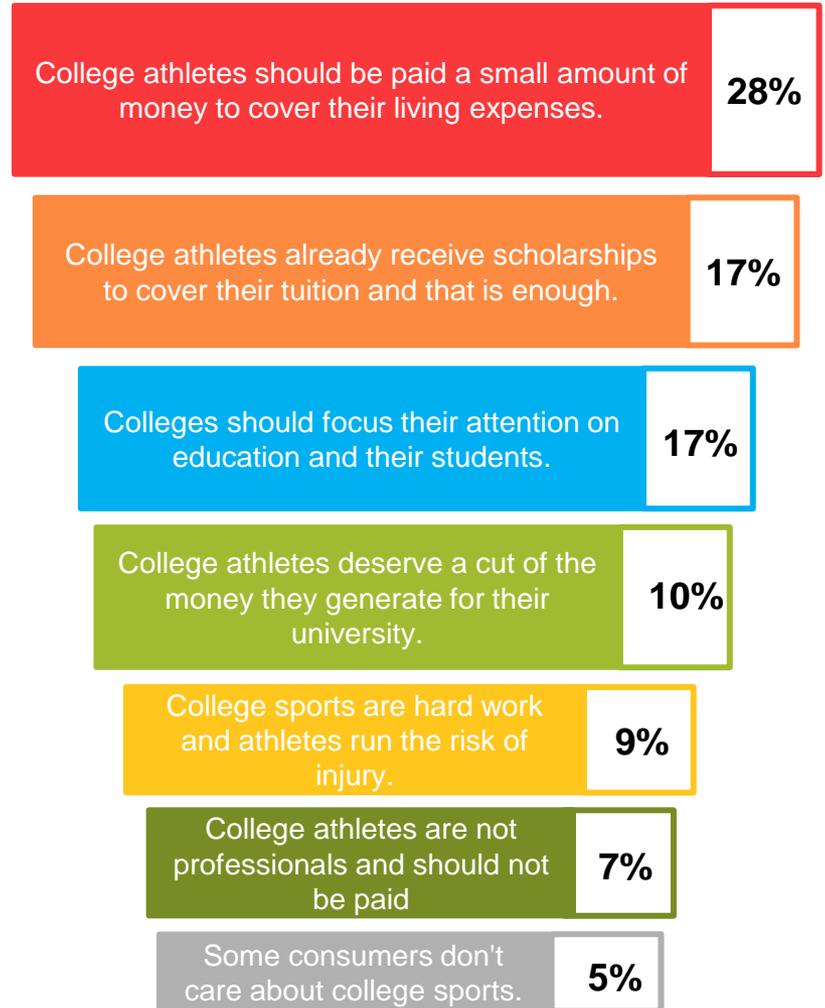
Those who believe that college athletes should be paid recognize the hard work, significant time commitment, and potential for injury that college athletes face. The majority of those in favor of payment believe college athletes should receive a small amount of money to help cover living expenses, while some argue that the revenue generated by college sports is so significant that athletes deserve their fair share of the profits. Consumers mention that payment might incentivize harder play.

Those who disagree with paying athletes believe that colleges and universities are first and foremost academic institutions and that their sole focus, and the focus of their athletes, needs to be on education, not sports. Anything more than a break on tuition would be unfair to other students. Furthermore, they believe that college athletes, who are not professionals, should simply play for their love of the game and consider the experience as preparation for a future in the big leagues.

On the subsequent pages, we'll illuminate the story behind these opinions by diving into the major themes. Each theme is summarized and accompanied by a visual construct that displays the nuances substantiating each main theme.

For an explanation of the methodology, please see page 16.

## THEMES



Percentages denote how frequently each theme was mentioned within the data set.

## THEME SUMMARY

# College athletes should be paid a small amount of money to cover their living expenses.

28%

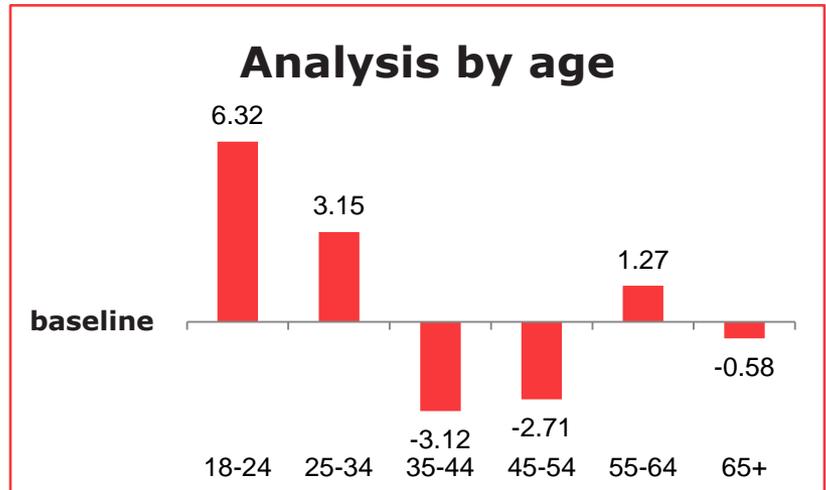
- Between practice, playing on the field, attending classes, and completing their schoolwork, college athletes simply don't have the time to devote to a job. Plus, college sports are a lot of hard work.
- Consumers don't think that college athletes should be given a massive paycheck, but they agree that they should receive a small amount to cover groceries, bills, and other living expenses.

*"A small amount would be fine, for example \$300 spending money per month. Because they don't have time for a job during training."*

*Male, 55-64, Midwest*

*"Pay them. They need to be compensated for their work and it's a job for them. They invest quite a bit of time, so they should be paid for their work. Nothing over the top but enough for them not to do stupid things to get by."*

*Male, 25-34, South*

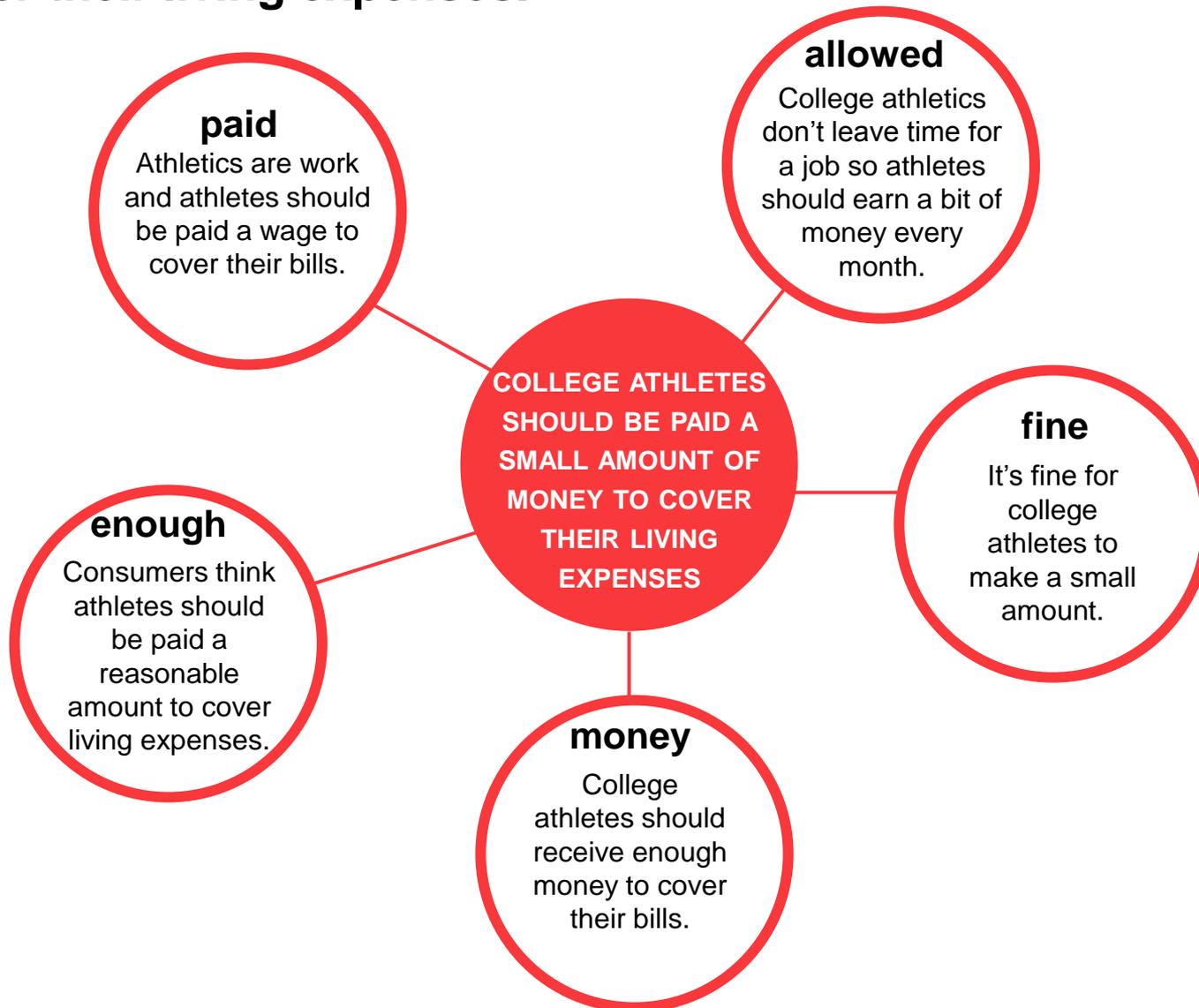


Prevalence scores indicate how frequently a theme was mentioned within a specific group of consumers. A score of 5 above or below the baseline denotes a noteworthy difference.

## VISUAL THEME CONSTRUCT

College athletes should be paid a small amount of money to cover their living expenses.

28%



## THEME SUMMARY

# College athletes already receive scholarships to cover their tuition and that is enough.

17%

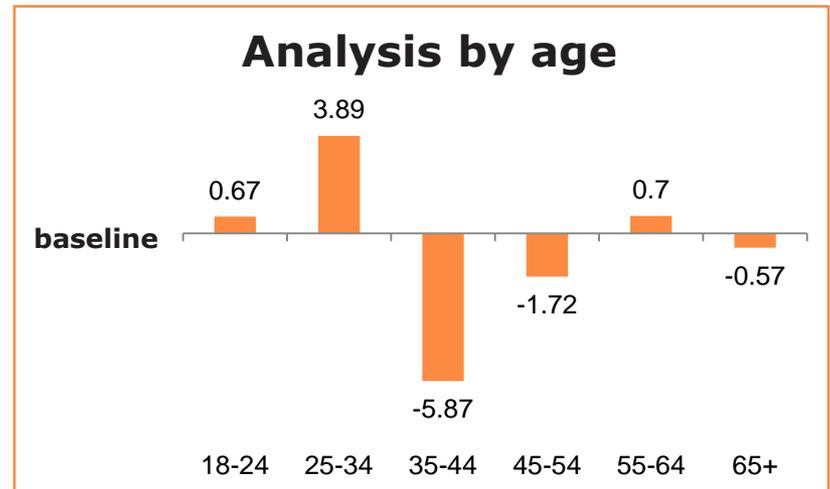
- College athletes may not receive a paycheck for their time on the field, but they do receive scholarships, have their tuition completely paid for, and sometimes even receive a small stipend to cover everyday expenses.
- In some sense, college athletes are already paid and offering them anything is unnecessary.

*"I think college athletes already technically get paid with scholarships and they have special programs and tutors that are provided for them. They shouldn't be paid. They're getting paid, and college sports are more honest because no one is getting paid."*

*Female, 18-24, Midwest*

*"College has tuition. Athletes have what is known as athletic scholarships that pay tuition. They are already being paid."*

*Male, 55-64, Northeast*

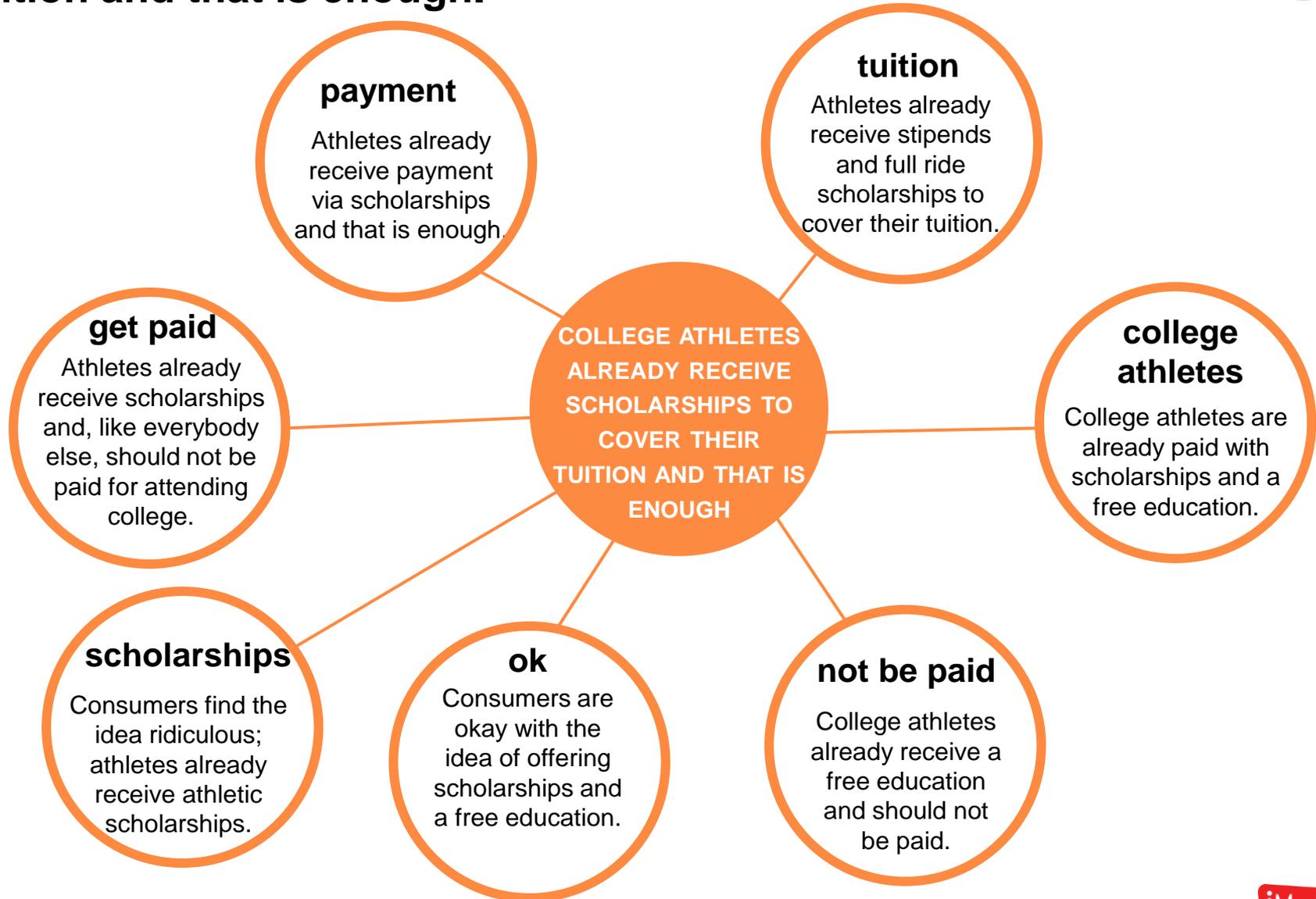


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## VISUAL THEME CONSTRUCT

17%

# College athletes already receive scholarships to cover their tuition and that is enough.



## THEME SUMMARY

# Colleges should focus their attention on education and their students.

17%

- At their core, colleges and universities are academic institutions founded for the purpose of education. However, consumers feel that schools too often prioritize athletics and athletes over other students and mention that students are already facing rising tuitions and cuts to non-athletic programs.
- It wouldn't be fair to start offering college athletes a paycheck. Attending college is not a job, it's an opportunity to get an education and earn a degree.

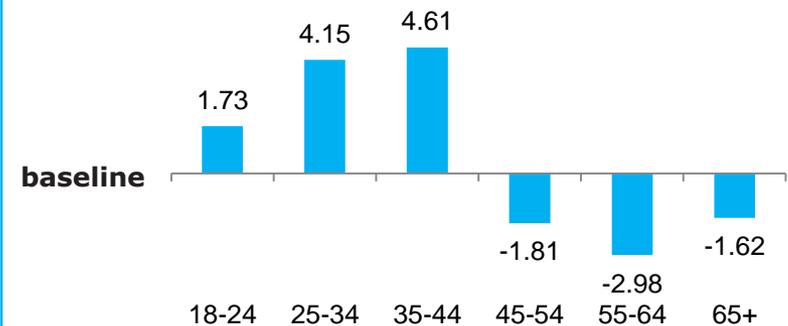
*"I feel it would be only one more distraction from the primary purpose of obtaining an education—and colleges don't need any more distractions."*

*Female, 35-44, West*

*"The fact that other programs like art and language etc. are being cut to cater to the college athletes is really crappy. I feel like most of my tuition is going to the football team, meanwhile other student organizations are struggling and dirt broke."*

*Female, 25-34, Midwest*

### Analysis by age

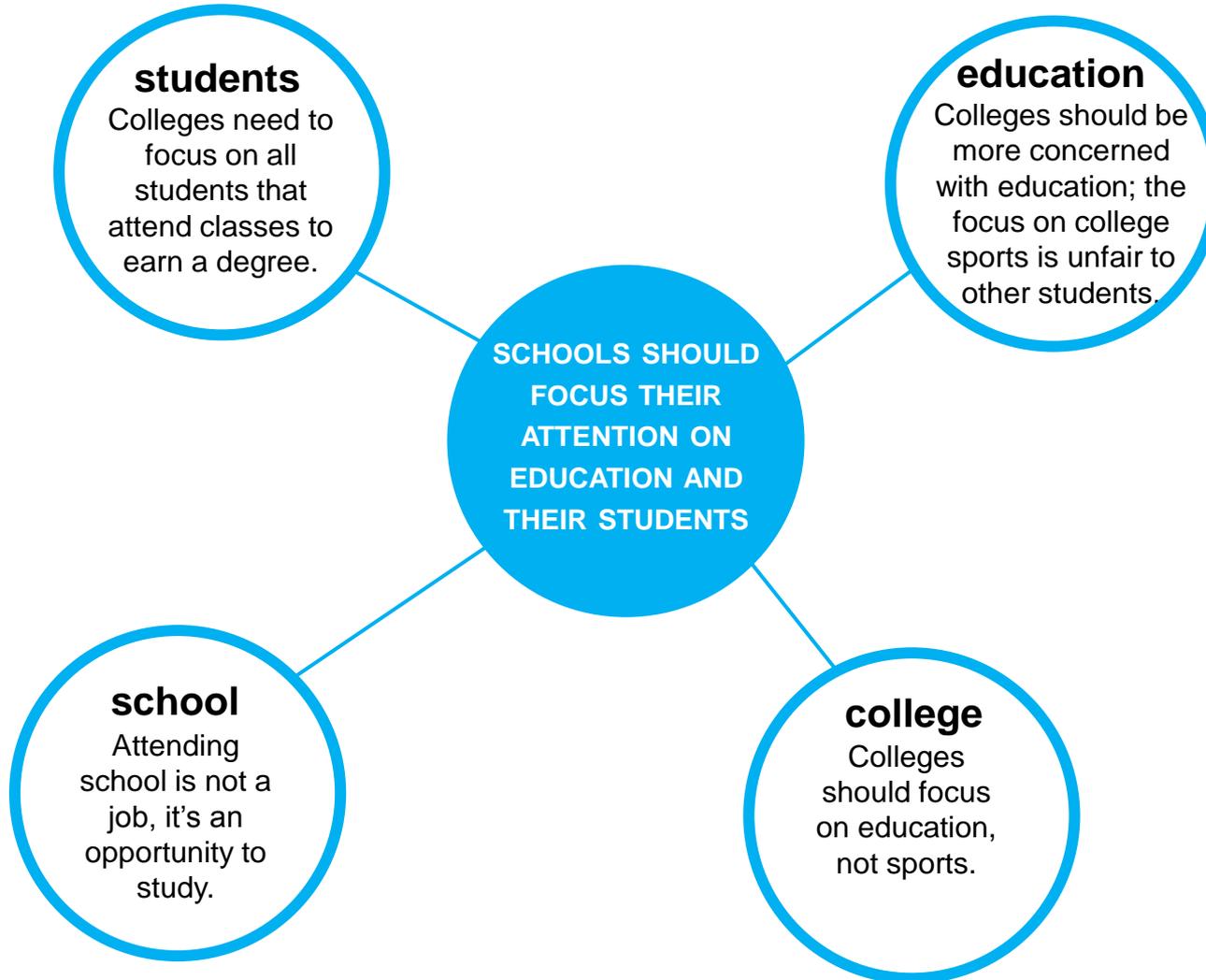


Prevalence scores indicate how frequently a theme was mentioned within a specific group of consumers. A score of 5 above or below the baseline denotes a noteworthy difference.

## VISUAL THEME CONSTRUCT

**Colleges should focus their attention on education and their students.**

17%



## THEME SUMMARY

# College athletes deserve a cut of the money they generate for their university.



- College athletics is a big business and it generates significant sums of money from advertising, sponsors, apparel, and donations.
- None of this would be possible without the athletes and everything that they invest in the game; they deserve their fair share of the proceeds. Plus, offering the athletes a cut could incentivize them to play even harder and ultimately generate more money for the school.

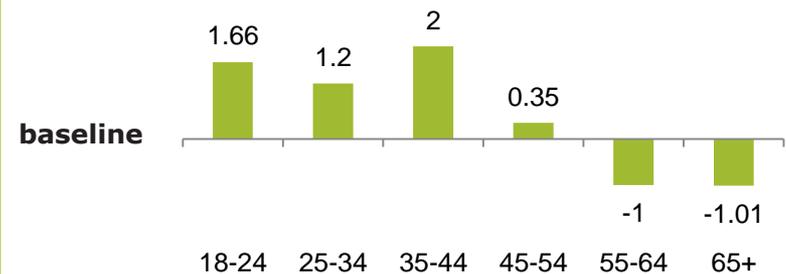
*“Of course athletes should be paid. They’re training everyday and going out to participate in an event that makes the university money and they deserve a share.”*

*Male, 18-24, West*

*“With the fees generated by sports programs today from TV, sponsors and new venues it is time for athletes to be compensated.”*

*Male, 45-54, South*

### Analysis by age

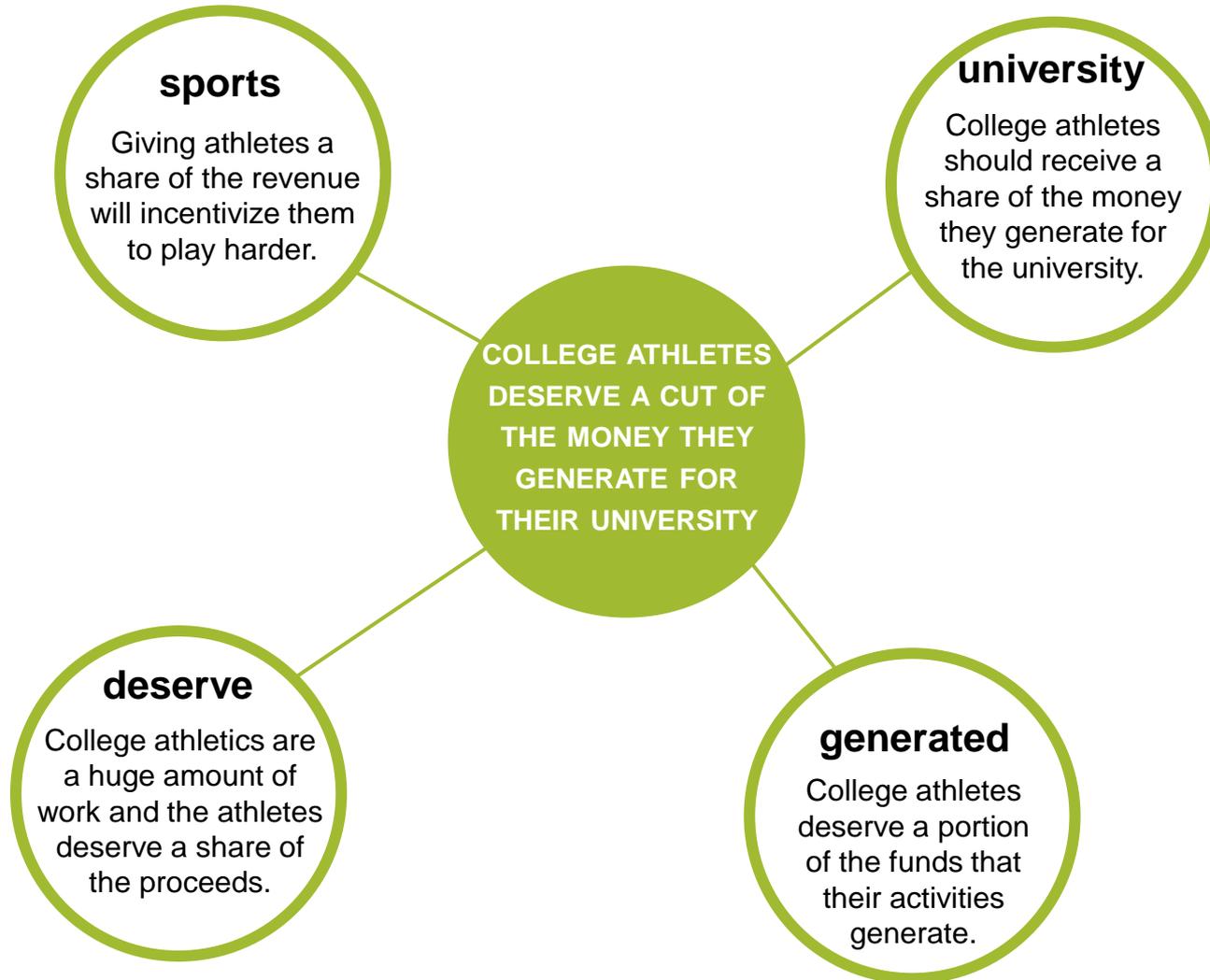


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## VISUAL THEME CONSTRUCT

# College athletes deserve a cut of the money they generate for their university.

10%



## THEME SUMMARY

# College sports are hard work and athletes run the risk of injury.

9%

- College sports require a significant time investment and are a lot of hard work. Most importantly, athletes constantly run the risk of being injured during practice or at a game. Providing them a pay check allows them to prepare for unforeseen medical expenses.

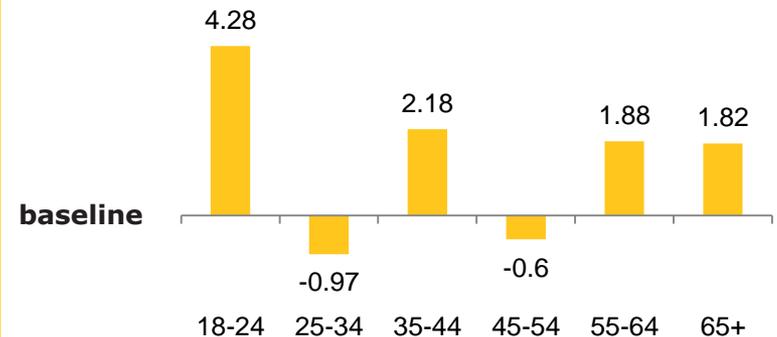
*"I think that college athletes should get paid to play sports especially since they run the risk of being injured. Also colleges make money off of the athletes."*

*Female, 35-44, Northeast*

*"They work just as hard if not harder than paid athletes due to needing to not only perform on court, field, etc. but also academically. Not that I believe they should be paid the same as pro athletes but something should be paid to them."*

*Male, 25-34, Midwest*

### Analysis by age



Prevalence scores indicate how frequently a theme was mentioned within a specific group of consumers. A score of 5 above or below the baseline denotes a noteworthy difference.

## VISUAL THEME CONSTRUCT

College sports are hard work and athletes run the risk of injury.



### yes

It's a good idea; many people don't realize that athletes could be injured.

COLLEGE SPORTS  
ARE HARD WORK  
AND ATHLETES RUN  
THE RISK OF INJURY

### athletes

College athletics is hard work and a huge time investment; plus athletes could be injured on the field.

## THEME SUMMARY

# College athletes are not professionals and should not be paid.



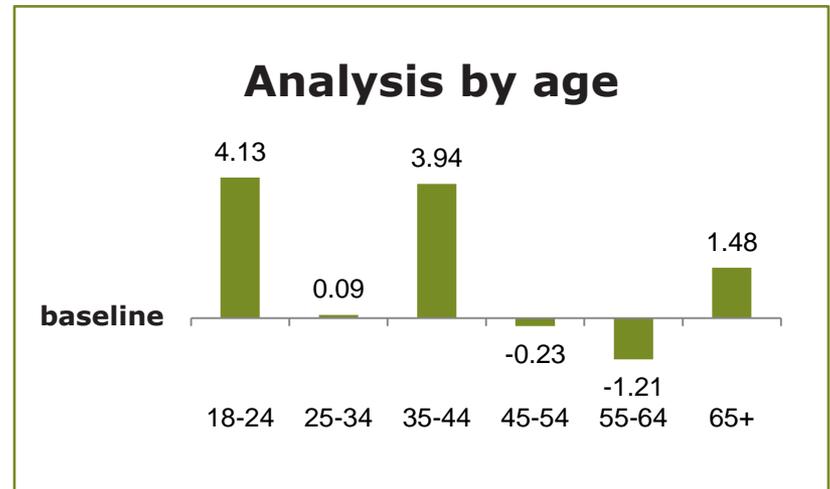
- College athletes are amateurs, not professionals. They may not be receiving a paycheck, but they are receiving preparation for a future in professional sports and exposure necessary to help them get drafted.
- As such, college athletes should play for their love of the game, not money.

*“Disassociate from the college if you are going to do that. I want to see amateurs playing for the passion of the game.”*

*Male, 45-54, Midwest*

*“Strongly and fully against it. A free education should be sufficient. Even if it is not free, it is a free platform to advertise to professional teams, builds community name recognition, and is associated with other monetary benefits after graduation.”*

*Male, 45-54, Midwest*



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## VISUAL THEME CONSTRUCT

# College athletes are not professionals and should not be paid.

7%

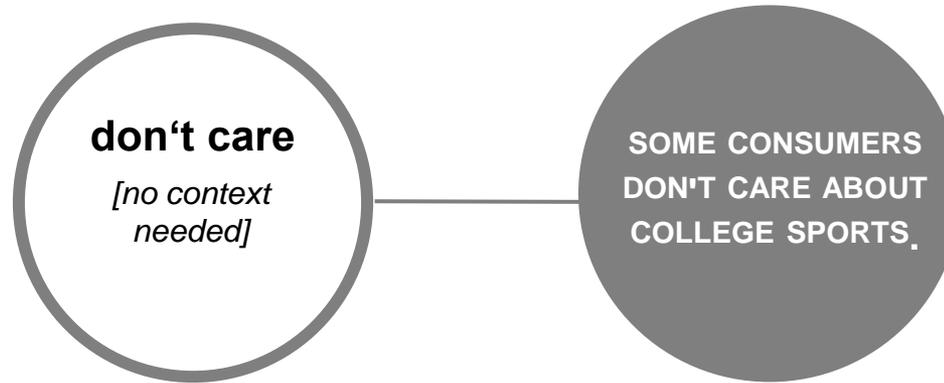


## THEME SUMMARY

# Some consumers don't care about college sports.



- Some consumers' lack of interest in college sports leaves them without an opinion on the topic.

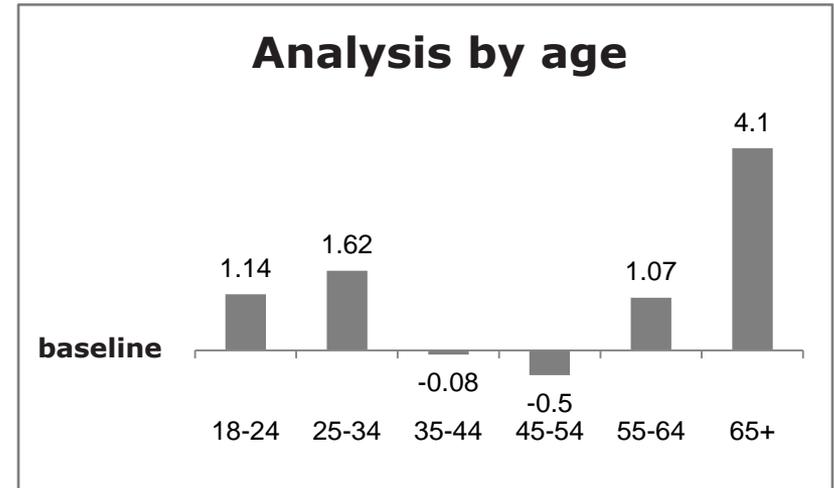


*"Don't care about it."*

*Male, 18-24, South*

*"Do not care about sports."*

*Female, 45-54, Midwest*



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# (iM)MERGE ANALYTICS

## Methodology

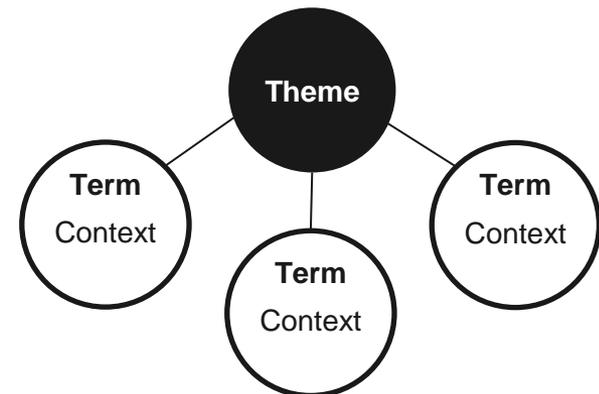
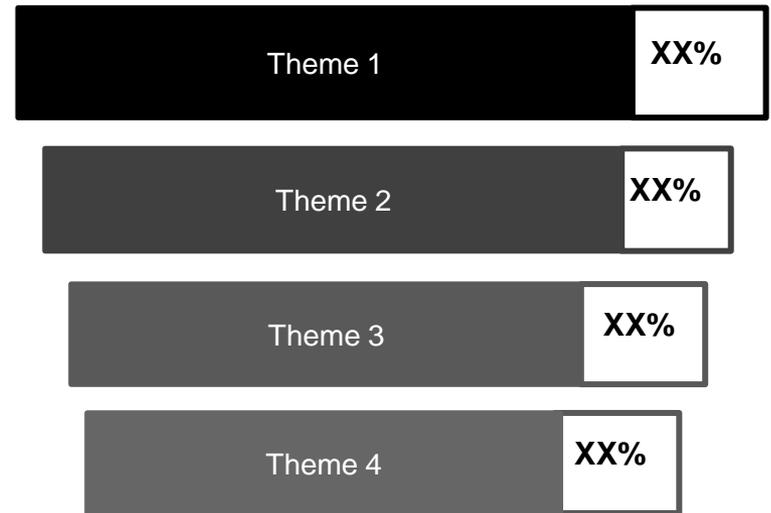
(iM)merge Analytics combines human qualitative analysts with text analytics to understand the story within a body of unstructured text—from survey response verbatims to product reviews to social media chatter and everything in between. iModerate's analysts use Luminoso, a text analytics tool, to comb unstructured text for the most mentioned and most relevant terms. The analyst then builds the story, starting with the relevant terms, aggregating the context around each term, and laddering the findings up into larger themes to develop a complete understanding of the consumer commentary.

Ultimately, there are three components of the analysis and results:

- **Themes:** Bucketed terms that give the complete story
- **Terms:** Most relevant words and phrases within the data
- **Context:** With the words most commonly used alongside any given term, we are able to understand its context

## Project Specifics

N=750 completes were collected using Google Consumer Surveys in December 2014.



Thank you

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