



Beyond Performance: Examining Athlete Brand Attributes as Drivers of Personal Relevance and Engagement Among Gen Z Non-Fans in Formula 1

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Dissertation written under the supervision of professor Mónica Borges.

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of requirements for the MSc in Management with Specialization in Strategic Marketing, at the Universidade Católica Portuguesa, January 2026.

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Abstract

Formula 1 has experienced a massive fandom growth over recent years, especially among Generation Z, namely due to digital media channels such as Netflix's docuseries "*Drive to Survive*" and social media content. In a sport where only the 20 best drivers in the world compete, these athletes represent the public face of the sport, playing an influential role, not only within the sport itself but beyond traditional fan communities. With the rise of social media and the freedom it allows for self-expression, athletes have increasingly assumed the role of celebrities and influencers, even among individuals outside sporting contexts. However, research on athletes' branding and sports fandom has typically focused on established fans, while individuals who don't consider themselves fans but have potential for conversion remain overlooked. This study aims to fill this gap by examining how different athlete brand image attributes influence initial engagement intentions among Gen Z non-fans of F1, with particular attention to the role of perceived personal relevance.

A quantitative online survey using a between-subjects experimental design was conducted with 390 Gen Z non-fans. Participants were exposed to athlete profiles emphasizing distinct brand image attributes. The results showed that lifestyle, off-track attributes are more effective in resonating and driving engagement amongst Gen Z non-fans. Overall, the findings highlight meaningful differences between existing and potential fans that diverge from established athlete branding literature.

This suggests that brands, teams, and athletes in F1 can strategically enhance their content by emphasising lifestyle-oriented portrayals to cultivate new fanbases.

Keywords: Gen Z, fan conversion, personal relevance, Formula 1, athlete brand image, sports marketing, engagement intentions, social media

Para lá de atletismo: Uma análise dos atributos de marca dos atletas como fatores determinantes da relevância pessoal e do envolvimento entre os não fãs da Geração Z na Fórmula 1

Ana Ribeiro

Abstrato

A Fórmula 1 teve um crescimento significativo de fãs nos últimos anos, especialmente entre a Geração Z, principalmente devido a canais de mídia digital, como a série documental “Drive to Survive” da Netflix e conteúdos nas redes sociais. Num desporto em que apenas os 20 melhores pilotos do mundo competem, estes atletas representam a modalidade, desempenhando um papel influente para lá das comunidades tradicionais de fãs. Com a ascensão das redes sociais e o que estas plataformas permitem à autoexpressão, os atletas assumem cada vez mais o papel de celebridades e influenciadores, inclusive a indivíduos fora de um contexto desportivo. A literatura sobre o impacto de atletas, tipicamente considera apenas adeptos existentes. Indivíduos não-fãs, mas que apresentam potencial para conversão, são negligenciados. Este estudo visa preencher essa ausência, examinando como diferentes atributos de atletas influenciam as intenções iniciais de envolvimento entre não fãs da Geração Z, tendo em conta o papel importante da relevância pessoal, na F1.

Foi desenvolvido um inquérito online com 390 não fãs da Geração Z. Os participantes foram expostos a perfis de atletas que demonstravam atributos distintos. Os resultados mostraram que atributos não-atléticos são mais eficazes para ressoar e impulsionar o envolvimento entre não fãs desta geração. São destacadas diferenças significativas entre fãs existentes e potenciais que divergem da literatura estabelecida sobre branding de atletas.

Isto sugere que as marcas, equipas e atletas da F1 podem melhorar estrategicamente o seu conteúdo, enfatizando conteúdos orientados para o estilo de vida, a fim de cultivar novos fãs.

Palavras-chave: Geração Z, conversão de fãs, relevância pessoal, Fórmula 1, imagem de atletas, marketing desportivo, intenções de interação, redes sociais

Acknowledgements

Writing my master's thesis was something I was looking forward to since enrolling in my degree, knowing of course, it would not be an easy task. This project was challenging, at times frustrating, but at its completion, so rewarding and fulfilling.

Although writing this thesis was an individual project, there are a few people without whom I would not have been able to do this.

First and foremost, my family. To my parents, thank you for the constant support, not only throughout this journey but ever since I can remember. I am eternally grateful for the opportunities you've given me, for the encouragement and belief you have in me; it has shaped me to become the person I am today, who's had the self-belief to complete this work and go after my dreams and goals. Obrigada. To my sister, my best friend, thank you for always supporting and being there for me.

To my friends who have been through this and guided me the way you could, thank you. Your belief in me motivated me and took me far in this journey. A special thank you to E, from your never-ending support and motivation to our library sessions, you've been such an important pillar for me when writing this thesis. And of course, I can't not mention the girls who wrote their theses alongside mine and shared in the frustrations, difficulties and hardships that accompanied this process, thank you for being by my side.

A big thank you is due to my supervisor, Professor Mónica Borges. Your guidance and time dedicated to supporting my development of this work was truly invaluable. Thank you.

I'm also very grateful to everyone who participated in my survey, who shared it and took the time to help, it was greatly appreciated and made this study possible.

And finally, I dedicate this to myself. With so many responsibilities on my hands throughout these past months, in addition to this massive project, there were times when I questioned myself, my work, my objectives. I pushed through, of course not without the support of those mentioned, and I created a piece of work that I can say I am proud of. This journey taught me so much about myself, it taught me resilience and taught me that I am capable of more than I think. This was an enlightening time which I'm truly grateful for.

Thank you.

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Introduction

Formula 1 (F1) is regarded, by The Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile as the highest level of motorsport racing (Serapiglia, 2018). Thanks to the massive success of the Netflix docuseries “Drive to Survive” in 2019 (Formula 1, 2019), the sport has experienced an immense growth in fandom in recent years. Reporting a 63% growth in total fan numbers since 2018 (Formula 1, 2025), F1 saw a considerable increase in interest amongst Gen Z audiences, and specifically female fans (Domenicali and Allen, 2025).

Following a global fan survey conducted every four years by Formula 1 and Motorsport Network, majority of growth was identified as coming from emerging markets such as the US, India, and Southeast Asia, however, Europe remained the largest fan pool, representing 49% of total F1 fans (Domenicali and Allen, 2025). Due to such popularity, research has emerged, focusing on how sports documentaries and digital media consumption have contributed to the F1 fandom (Shah and Williams, 2025; Wood and Burkhalter, 2023), yet many aspects remain to be explored.

Digital marketing strategies, but specifically social media platforms, have significantly changed the way sports are both communicated and consumed. Because of the “Drive to Survive” popularity, similar docuseries were produced in different sports contexts, such as tennis’ Break Point and basketball’s “The Last Dance.” In Formula 1 itself, new Gen Z fans, are discovering the sport through these modern entryways, making it an important research subject as it influences the type of content that is consumed and engaged with (Domenicali and Allen, 2025).

Following the purchase of F1 by Liberty Media in 2017, the sport has had a major shift in its marketing initiatives, significantly emphasising communication through digital channels to reach its audiences (Hawes, 2024). This change, which allowed for audiences to get a closer look at behind-the-scenes aspects of F1, led not only to the rise of Formula 1 content creators and influencers, but also teams and athletes as content creators themselves. This has turned Formula 1 into a culturally integrated form of entertainment, straying from its previous connotations of an “old man’s sport” and a purely technical focus on motorsport.

As athletes are now considered celebrities and brands of their own (Harasta, 2021), research has emerged on how to quantify and measure their personal brands. The Model of Athlete Brand Image (MABI) (Arai, Ko and Kaplanidou, 2013), is a well-established framework that

breaks the athlete brand image into three key dimensions consisting on and off-field elements: *athletic performance*, *attractive appearance*, and *marketable lifestyle*. In the digital age, athletes themselves have a large control over how they portray and market these attributes through their own social media channels, which in addition to related social media content (from team or third-party content creators), contributes to shaping first impressions amongst non-fans.

These new forms of engagement on social media platforms are key to boosting visibility and engagement amongst emerging audiences such as Gen Z, who are more likely to discover the sport through digital media (Hawes, 2024). As mentioned previously, the Gen Z demographic, and particularly women within the segment, have been leading the growth of the sport. Yet, Gen Z is a demographic which benefits from further research, particularly in the context of Formula 1.

Additionally, the bulk of existing literature focuses on established fans; however, non-fans present a demographic worth studying. Non-fans are considered individuals with low F1 involvement and exposure to the sport, who do not identify as fans, but may have limited encounter with F1 through social media and other digital channels. Thus, this demographic offers a strategic advantage as it sits on the threshold of conversion and engagement.

This gap in the existing research poses an opportunity for the present study to investigate a demographic that has yet to be captured. Sensibly, established fans are more thoroughly investigated, but understanding how Gen Z non-fans move from casual exposure to initial engagement, and what drives personal relevance amongst them, may reveal insights vital to prompt conversion.

Therefore, the present study poses the following research question: *To what extent do athlete brand image attributes drive initial fan conversion through personal relevance of Gen Z non-fans in Formula 1?* The following objectives have been devised for this study:

1. Identify which athlete image attributes most strongly shape personal relevance of Formula 1 amongst Gen Z non-fans.
2. Assess how strongly perceived personal relevance predicts initial engagement intentions towards Formula 1.
3. Examine whether social and peer influence moderates perceived personal relevance and initial engagement intentions.

4. Determine whether social media usage intensity positively moderates the relationship between appearance-based attributes and initial engagement intentions.

This study is divided into four parts. The first part looks at the existing literature and focuses on analysing relevant topics, essential to understanding the background of the research. Part two develops the methodology, including the choice of sample as well as the data collection methods employed. The third part presents the data collected as well as an analysis relevant to the hypotheses and objectives identified. Finally, the last part elaborates the consequences of the findings with a discussion, concludes the study, and proposes directions for future research as well as the limitations encountered.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Athletes Personal Brand

2.1.1 Athlete brand image

With sports media being one of the most consumed on a global scale, the figures at the forefront, athletes, have become more than sportspeople, they have become cultural markers themselves (Arai, Ko, and Ross, 2014), consequently becoming prominent across media outlets, including social media. As such, athletes have become brands themselves, with many developing their personal brands beyond the sport they practice (Arai, Ko, and Kaplanidou, 2013), making it essential to determine what constitutes an athlete brand.

Although there is no established consensus on what defines an athlete brand, previous literature asserts that the consumer perception of athletes is not all that different from that of traditional brands (Na, Kunkel, and Doyle, 2020). Kotler (2000, p. 6) defines a brand as an offering from a known source with the brand image stemming from the associations raised by a brand name in the consumer's mind (Keller, 1993). Arai, Ko and Ross (2014) defined an athlete brand as an individual athlete with an established public persona and symbolic meaning. Given that consumers form their perception of an athlete in much the same way they do as a brand (Na, Kunkel, and Doyle, 2020), athlete brand image frameworks have been developed parallel to Keller's brand knowledge schema (Arai, Ko and Kaplanidou, 2013).

Athlete brand image is widely accepted to be a multidimensional notion that is shaped by consumer perceptions, although distinctions are made by various researchers. Hasaan et al.

(2016) propose that an athlete's brand image is made up only of on-field and off-field attributes, with media and communication antecedents, amongst others, being an integral element in forming positive associations.

Conversely, Arai, Ko and Kaplanidou (2013) proposed a three-dimensional model, the Model of Athlete Brand Image (MABI), composed of Athletic Performance, Attractive Appearance, and Marketable Lifestyle as the key elements, with a total of ten subdimensions. The MABI grounds itself on endorser image literature as well as sport team branding research (Arai, Ko and Kaplanidou, 2013), bridging the gap between celebrity endorsement research and athlete branding studies, thus, providing a basis for the present study.

Literature common ground is that positive perception of athlete brand image leads to fan loyalty and engagement (Arai, Ko and Kaplanidou, 2013; Hasaan et al., 2016; Hasaan et al., 2018; Mahmoudian et al., 2021). Scholars consider lifestyle and appearance factors to especially drive social media engagement which then acts as a mediator for fan loyalty (Magano, Szczygiel and Au-Yong-Oliveira, 2024); on-field attributes remain a key aspect of the athlete brand image as they validate source credibility theory, crucial for establishing brand differentiation and validity (Doyle, Su and Kunkel, 2022).

While existing research shows that athlete brand image drives fan loyalty and engagement, these relationships have been predominantly studied among established fans. The knowledge on how people who do not yet consider themselves sports fans perceive athlete brand attributes, and if these can create initial relevance and engagement among for these audiences, is far more limited.

2.1.2 On-field performance

On-field performance refers to the athletic abilities and professional achievements of an athlete. The attributes considered here – behaviour, team attitudes, achievements, skill and style of play (Hasaan et al., 2016) – are key in building credibility and sparking fan interest, however, Arai, Ko and Kaplanidou (2013) assert that it is not sufficient for deep fan loyalty. Within the Model of Athlete Brand Image, these attributes are classified into four sub-dimensions: Athletic Expertise, Competition Style, Sportsmanship, and Rivalry. On-field attributes are credited to be the trigger for initial brand formation of an athlete among sport-involved individuals; however, their relevance for individuals with limited interest and engagement (non-fans) remains less clear.

2.1.3 Attractive Appearance

Although Hasaan et al. (2016) conflate this dimension with marketable lifestyle in one single off-field attributes dimension, attractive appearance is a distinct category within the MABI as it is seen as one of the primary components of a celebrity's source credibility (Ohanian, 1991). This dimension considers physical attractiveness, body fitness, and (visual) symbols (i.e. tattoos) (Arai, Ko and Kaplanidou, 2013). Physical attractiveness refers to qualities and characteristics that may be deemed aesthetically pleasing by fans, relating to not only physical appearance but also expression (Arai, Ko and Kaplanidou, 2013). Body fitness, considered a separate sub-category due to subjectivity of athletic fitness across sports, is an important category as it evaluates an integral aspect of being an athlete, and may reflect an athlete's commitment, potentially enhancing their brand image (Arai, Ko and Kaplanidou, 2013). Finally, symbol refers to visual aspects of an athlete's outward expression, such as personal style and trademark image elements (Arai, Ko and Ross, 2014).

2.1.4 Marketable Lifestyle

This dimension refers to the off-field traits that can be indicative of an athlete's values or personality, and are sub-divided into life story, role model, and relationship effort (Arai, Ko and Kaplanidou, 2013). Kunkel, Doyle and Na (2022) extend this to include philanthropic actions and social responsibility; this is included in the role model sub-dimension of the Model of Athlete Brand Image. In addition to professional success, celebrities' unique lifestyles earn them status (Mahmoudian et al., 2020), making it essential that athletes possess marketable qualities that reflect their values and resonate with consumers. Arai, Ko and Kaplanidou (2013) identified this dimension as a key driver for long-term fan loyalty and emotional engagement, particularly in contexts where emotional attachment and identification have already been established. Marketable lifestyle is essential for differentiating an athlete brand, but it can positively or negatively affect brand image as lifestyle aspects are often heavily scrutinised by the media (Hasaan et al., 2016).

Consequently, an athlete's conduct outside of their profession can directly impact how they are perceived by fans (McDonald and Andrews, 2001).

Life story refers to unique and appealing moments that happen in an athlete's life off the field, with the potential for one unique episode alone having the ability of enhancing the athlete brand (Jowdy and McDonald, 2002). This aspect of storytelling is crucial as sharing personal journeys and providing authenticity can resonate with fans, thus building a stronger

emotional connection between fans and athletes (Laurell and Söderman, 2018). Personable and relatable stories that reflect authenticity help fans connect emotionally with athletes (Taniyev, Mayer and Gordon, 2022), which on a practical level increases an athlete's marketability.

Role model pertains predominantly to the role an athlete plays within society and how they contribute to it (Arai, Ko and Kaplanidou, 2013) which has the capacity of shifting associations to an athlete's brand image from sport-specific to overall character perceptions (Kunkel, Doyle and Na, 2022). For example, previous research has shown that pro-social messages from athlete celebrities are more favourably perceived than ones from traditional brands, increasing trustworthiness and credibility, and as such, brand support (Dunn and Nisbett, 2023).

Relationship effort refers to the interactions athletes maintain with their supporters and fans (Arai, Ko and Kaplanidou, 2013). Rooted in relationship marketing theory, it is key that these interactions and behaviours remain consistent to maintain long-term fan relationships (Doyle, Su and Kunkel, 2022). Consumers expect engagement from athletes as it not only deepens the bond with fans, but fosters a sense of trust (Taniyev, Mayer and Gordon, 2022).

The presence of these attributes alone, whilst not sufficient to lead to fan conversion or engagement, typically results in a psychological commitment among fans (Arai, Ko and Kaplanidou, 2013). For non-fans to engage with athletes and consequently sports, these attributes must be perceived as personally relevant to encourage engagement. This indicates how personal relevance acts as a psychological factor that drives athlete traits to affect early engagement among non-fans.

As such the following hypotheses have been devised:

H1: The athlete brand image attributes of F1 athletes have a positive impact on perceived personal relevance of F1 amongst Gen Z non-fans.

H1_a: *Athletic performance* attributes of F1 athletes have a positive impact on perceived personal relevance of F1 amongst Gen Z non-fans.

H1_b: *Attractive appearance* attributes of F1 athletes have a positive impact on perceived personal relevance of F1 amongst Gen Z non-fans.

H1_c: *Marketable lifestyle* attributes of F1 athletes have a positive impact on perceived personal relevance of F1 amongst Gen Z non-fans.

2.1.5 Athletes & Social Media

In the era of social media, athletes can build a large fanbase which in turn gives them considerable control of their public image (Xu, 2025). The authority and influence that social media has provided athletes with has caused a shift in the field of sports marketing, with athletes becoming influencers, and one of the preferred methods for brands to reach supporters (Aydin, 2024, pp. 121-126). As such, the study of athletes' social media self-presentation is developing in the field of sports marketing and management.

Traditional mass media not only increased the popularity of athletes (Hasaan et al., 2018), but it used to shape an athlete's identity too (Jackson and Andrews, 2012). Social media, however, has offered athletes a platform for taking control of their brand and humanise it (Doyle, Su and Kunkel, 2022; Taniyev, Mayer and Gordon, 2022); it has also become a powerful tool for generating interest and further knowledge about athletes (Hasaan et al, 2018). In addition to its advantage as a branding and marketing tool, social media has given athletes increased autonomy over their image, allowing them to combat stereotypes and mass-media framing (Xu,2025). Whilst social media allows athletes to directly communicate and craft their personal brand, an effective content strategy is required to mitigate risks and enhance the athlete's image.

Differences have been identified in the way that female and male athletes utilise their social media; as a means of breaking societal and media stereotypes, sportswomen tend to focus on their athletic accomplishments, whilst their male counterparts will also be more open about their personal lives (Xu, 2025). Considering the line of research for the present work – Formula One is a predominantly male sport – this section will focus on how male athletes utilize their social media; however, future research could investigate how female athletes in motor sports portray themselves on social media.

Athlete self-presentation on social media can be understood through impression management theory (Agyemang and Williams, 2016). Theorised by Goffman in 1959, impression management consists of an individual's behaviours that are carried out to shape or influence outside perceptions of them (Tedeschi, 1981, p. 3). On social media, this is reflected in curated content that aims to maintain a desired image (Xu, 2025). Nevertheless, it is important to emphasise that fans expect authenticity from athletes on social media (Taniyev,

Mayer and Gordon, 2022); this builds a necessary trust and emotional bond with fans, key for maintaining a favourable and personable image (Hasaan et al., 2018).

In addition to the three MABI categories through which athletes present themselves on social media, Doyle, Su and Kunkel (2022) proposed a fourth one: Offstage Content. This type of content, although reflective of the athlete's personality, does not necessarily align with the three categories of Athletic Performance, Attractive Appearance, and Marketable Lifestyle; it could be content such as inspirational quotes, or humorous posts, even TikTok dances, a feat increasingly observed amongst younger athletes. Doyle, Su and Kunkel (2022) further highlight the importance that this type of social-media-native content has, to broadening an athlete's brand image.

From a fan perspective, social media has become the main stage for cementing group identity; fans use social media to meet social and psychological needs (Rubin, 2009, cited in Harasta, 2021). Through participating in virtual conversations about their teams and players, fans are strengthening bonds not only with other fans but with athletes too (Harasta, 2021). Additionally, with athlete-fan interactions increasingly taking place on social media (Jackson and Andrews, 2012), there is an increase in identification, emotional involvement, and perceived closeness with athletes (Magano, Szczygiel and Au-Yong-Oliveira, 2024).

Magano, Szczygiel and Au-Yong-Oliveira (2024) found that among established fans, engagement with athletes' social media, specifically lifestyle and appearance content, plays a role in fostering a more personal connection with an athlete. Amongst non-fan audiences, who may lack sport-specific knowledge or interest, such visual attributes are stronger drivers of initial personal relevance. This aligns with source credibility theory (Ohanian, 1990) which establishes that appearance is a vital component of credibility in visual media contexts; athletic performance requires deeper understanding, resulting in a weaker effect on initial personal relevance. As such, the following exploratory hypothesis has been devised:

H2: Among the three athlete brand attributes, marketable lifestyle is expected to show a stronger positive association with perceived personal relevance than athletic performance and attractive appearance.

2.2. Personal Relevance in the Context of Gen Z

Generation Z, the "digitally native" generation of individuals born between 1997 and 2012 (Dimock, 2019), is constantly exposed to digital communications, and prefer quick and

shorter-form content due to regular social media consumption (Kollárová and Niklová, 2025). This frequent use of social media has also become an important contributor to shaping one's identity (Sitompul, Noviani and Sembiring, 2023), a factor unique to this generation. This is reflected in Gen Z's expectation of meaningful interactions in the digital world which subsequently drive personal relevance of online content (Hammouri et al., 2025).

Personal relevance is a psychological construct within motivation theory that refers to the degree to which an experience or idea is significant and connected to an individual's life and values (Lieberman and Chaiken, 1996). It is an important construct that contributes to the understanding of motivational and behavioural attitudes towards an attitude object (Guo and Fryer, 2025). Because of its subjective nature, personal relevance can stem from intrinsic and extrinsic stimuli, but objects of interest must always retain some personal meaning to the individual (Bayer, Ruthmann and Schact, 2017; Hjørland, 2010; Priniski, Hecht and Harackiewicz, 2018).

Scholars agree that personal relevance exists along a continuum of increasing perceived meaningfulness. Developed by Priniski, Hecht and Harackiewicz (2018), the Relevance Continuum unifies three leading theories in motivation theory and classifies relevance in three types: Personal Association, Personal Usefulness, and Identification as the strongest type which links to one's self-identity.

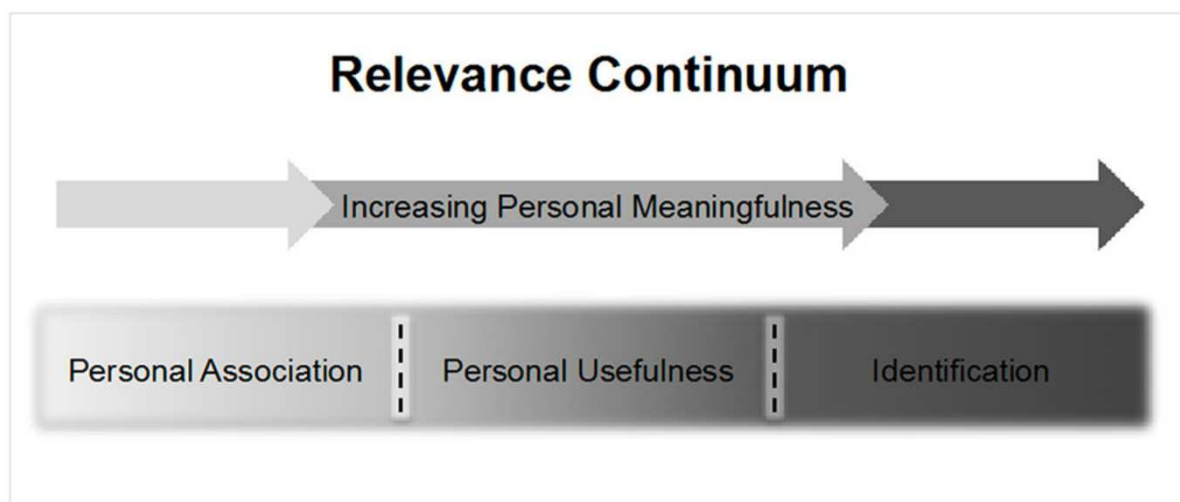


Figure 1: The Relevance Continuum (Priniski, Hecht and Harackiewicz, 2018)

As sports fandom becomes part of someone's identity, with it come varying degrees of significance and the role it plays in an individual's life. Thus, in the context of this study, personal relevance is conceptualised as a psychological pathway through which athlete brand attributes may become meaningful to non-fans, enhancing the flow from awareness to initial engagement. Consequently, the following hypothesis was devised:

H3: Personal relevance functions as a mediating mechanism in the relationship between brand attributes and initial engagement intentions amongst gen z non-fans.

2.3. Fandom in Sports

2.3.1 Fan Psychology

Fan psychology focuses on key aspects such as belonging, meaning, excitement, and self-esteem (Harasta, 2021). Fandom in sports is experienced in a myriad of ways, from self-identification to public displays of loyalty towards a team/athlete and typically involves an emotional and physical investment in sports participation and communities (Harasta, 2021). At the root of fan psychology are frameworks like social identity theory (SIT) and role identity theory (RIT) which help to explain why sports fans engage in their activities and behaviours (Harasta, 2021).

Developed by Turner and Tajfel (1979), SIT defends that part of people's identities come from their memberships in social groups, often resulting in ingroup attitudes – “us” versus “them”. SIT's essential principles are those of social categorisation, identification, and comparison (Koo et al., 2025), which are underpinned by the need for established identity and enhanced self-esteem (Rees et al., 2015; Turner, Brown and Tajfel, 1979).

Role identity theory complements SIT by offering a framework that emphasises how the roles individuals take on within a group not only guide their behaviour, but also influence their self-concept (Chun and Sagas, 2022; Harasta, 2021; Koo et al., 2025). Stets and Burke (2000) hold that role identities predominantly stem from the interpersonal interactions amongst in-group members and that for roles to function, they are paired with counter roles which results in “identity verification” (Chun and Sagas, 2022), a key pillar of RIT.

2.3.2. Sports Fans

Whilst there is no universally accepted definition for sport fandom (Toffoletti, 2017), common characteristics and attitudes have been identified. As such, sport fans can be defined

as individuals who portray an enthusiastic attitude to a sports consumption object – sport discipline, team, and/or sports personality (Hunt, Bristol and Bashaw, 1999; Wann and James, 2019). However, because the object of devotion can differ amongst individuals, scholars agree that there are various types of fans (Harasta, 2021; Hunt, Bristol and Bashaw, 1999; Wann et al., 2008).

Classifications of fans may differ; Hunt, Bristol and Bashaw (1999) categorise fans into: temporary, local, devoted, fanatical, and dysfunctional fans; Wann et al. (2008) identify distinct fan profiles depending on sport type, which they classify into team vs. individual, aggressive vs. non-aggressive, and stylistic vs. non-stylistic. Wann and James (2019) also denote the importance of the fan experience being ever-changing, and that individuals may shift through typologies.

Fan motives in sports also differ depending on fan typology, however, amongst the most common motivations are identity and self-definition, social connection and belonging, emotional arousal, and entertainment purposes.

Enhanced Identity as motivation

Through sport fandom, individuals seek out ways of developing their sense of self and self-worth (Harasta, 2021). This is supported by social identity theory, wherein individuals look to enhance their self-esteem by associating themselves with the success of others, in this case a team or an athlete (Wann and James, 2019). The identification that stems from the internalization of such figures into a fan's sense of self, leads to behaviours such as attendance, fandom display, and conversation surrounding the object of fan devotion (Harasta, 2021; Hunt, Bristol and Bashaw, 1999; Vallerand et al., 2008).

Social connection and a need for belonging

In its nature, sport fandom is a social activity independently of where it's carried out (Wann and James, 2019). The sense of community and belonging derived from a sports community is often considered as one of the primary influences for becoming a sports fan (Harasta, 2021; Richardson, 2011). In this quest for community, individuals are also able to partake in activities that further deepen the group affiliation. There are many ritualistic activities associated with sports, particularly on match-days, which gives fans not only a sense of collective participation (Richardson, 2011), but extend the social aspects of sports fandom (Harasta, 2021).

Given the social nature of humans, sport fandom becomes thus, an attractive engagement (Wann and James, 2019). However, research on fan development has established that social influence operates differently at different stages of the fan journey. Richardson (2011) emphasises fan conversion as a deeply social experience, where social influence amplifies commitment towards a sport object. This suggests that social influence could act as an amplifier of personal relevance, where individuals who are more likely to be influenced by peers may also be more likely to engage with an athlete, they deem personally relevant.

Consequently, the following hypothesis will be investigated:

H4: Social influence acts as a moderator in the relationship between personal relevance and initial engagement intentions.

2.3.3. The Fan Lifecycle

In the same way that athletes are now considered to be brands of their own, sports fans are often also considered as consumers (Hunt, Bristol and Bashaw, 1999) with customer-like behaviours (Yoshida et al., 2014). As such, it is key to identify the consumer life cycle, which like the product life cycle, consists of four distinct stages: introduction, growth, maturity, and decline (Lee, Lanting and Rojdamrongratana, 2017; Rink and Swan, 1979). The consumer life cycle has presented itself as a basis for ensuing research, leading to Tamir's (2020) cyclical Fan Lifecycle Model.

However, much research infers that sports fandom originates in childhood from parental figures (Spaaij and Anderson, 2010), and given this study's focus on adult non-fans, the conversion pathways differ from traditional fans. Thus, alternative models provide a better foundation for understanding this demographic.

An alternative view for the study of the fandom process is the Psychological Continuum Model (PCM) which investigates the movement from initial awareness to allegiance (Funk and James, 2001). This framework explains the progressive development of affiliation to a sports object (discipline, team, or activity) through four stages: awareness, attraction, attachment, and allegiance which marks the highest level of loyalty (Funk and James, 2001; Wann and James, 2019) (see Table 1).

Table 1: The Psychological Continuum Model (Funk and James, 2001)

The Psychological Continuum Model (Funk and James, 2001)	
Stage of Connection	Characteristics
Awareness	Individuals have an awareness of the sport or team but lack personal interest; knowledge is driven by external forces
Attraction	Individuals develop an interest for the sport (or team) and may establish a favourite one; finding enjoyment and/or social benefits in carrying out this activity; impact comes from contextual influences
Attachment	Psychological connection strengthens and sport/team acquires personal importance within the individual; link to self-concept
Allegiance	High levels of consistent support and durable involvement with the sports object; attitudes relating to a sport/team become resistant to change and sport/team becomes part of identity

The fan journey is considered a sequential process. The PCM posits that individuals move through the four stages and are influenced by both internal and external factors (Wann and James, 2019). Conversely, Hunt, Bristol and Bashaw (1999) describe the fan journey as a sequential yet flexible process where the object of devotion may shift levels through time. The fan pathway exists at multiple levels (i.e. sport, team, athlete) but follows a typical structure of cognitive schema → identification → emotional attachment, being influenced by a halo effect (Hunt, Bristol and Bashaw, 1999). Due to the different typologies of fans, it is implied that different degrees of fan journeys exist.

Fan Conversion

Fan conversion generally refers to the process by which a non-committed, casual follower goes to being a committed and active fan, with scholars agreeing that it is typically evidenced through transactional acts, such as ticket purchases, buying merchandise or paying for subscriptions (Kim, 2021; Yoshida et al., 2014).

Although the literature on fan conversion in sports is still quite limited, existing studies have explored factors such as narrative storytelling and exposure to fan communities as triggers for conversion. Due to its identity-shaping nature, the conversion process often begins through a personal experience that is highly emotional and potentially overwhelming, and typically impromptu (Richardson, 2011). Furthermore, in the Fan Conversion Experience model, Richardson denotes four contributing triggers: the presence of “gods” (the star athletes), a sacred place and time, a sacred tribe, and an ecstatic and co-productive atmosphere.

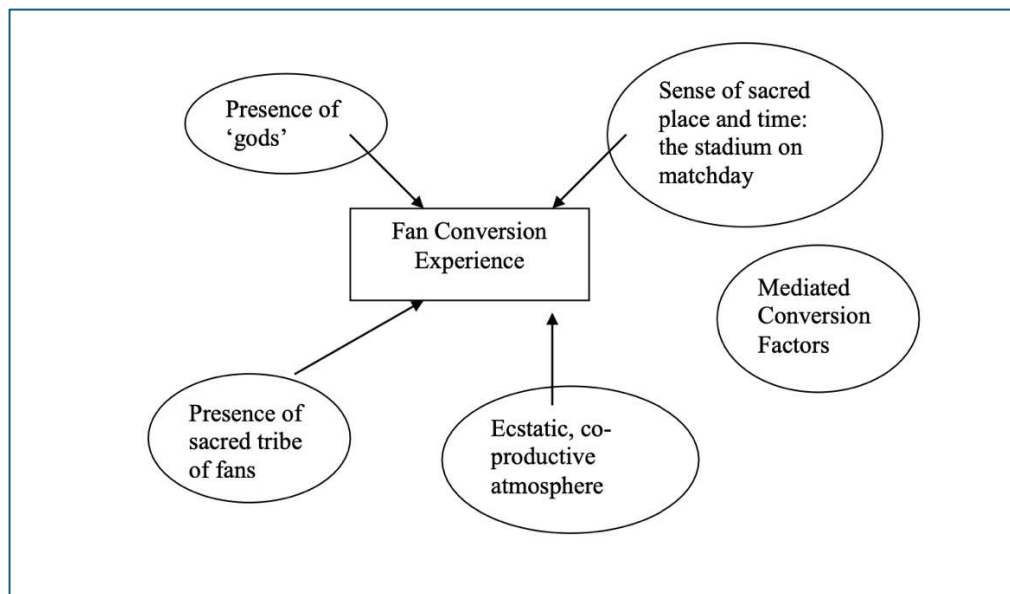


Figure 2: The Fan Conversion Experience (Richardson, 2011)

In an age where sports are turning more towards streaming, and social media is prevalent, live events cease being the only circumstances for fan conversion. Soble and Lowes (2024) explored the impact of storytelling on fan conversion within the docuseries “Drive to Survive”. They identified narrative elements of adventure, rivalry, and success as key aspects for conversion. These emotional drivers are a contributing factor in creating ties and identification with a team or athlete, thereby driving conversion (Abosag, Roper and Hind, 2012; Vale and Fernandes, 2018; Yoshida et al., 2014).

Additionally, aspects that align with social identity theory and maintaining self-esteem through association are powerful tools for conversion, for example, the hero archetype evidenced in the docuseries (Soble and Lowes, 2024). It should be noted that this does not have to be exclusive to narrative content. Richardson (2011) describes athletes as “gods” who, within the context of a sporting event, produce a sense of excellence and dominance to non-fans, thus beginning the process of conversion. Athletes are considered present-day

significant societal figures – extending their “god-like” image to a broader, non-sports-related setting – making their characteristics an appropriate study case.

Social media presents itself as a beneficial means to convert non-fans. It should be acknowledged that non-fans might not have an initial interest in sports, so reaching such audiences should be done through content that resonates. Cortés, 2025 found that non-sports fans resonate more with personality-driven content that resonates with their interests and values, rather than athletic content; Vale and Fernandes (2018) support this – social media fosters conversion because of the emotional experiences it provides in addition to the communal interaction.

The overarching themes that contribute to fan conversion are those that convey a strong emotional response from an individual as well as those that enhance one’s self-identity, aligning with what also constitutes a sports fan, yet without the initial interest in sport.

Within the existing literature, athlete-related aspects are still underexplored as means of fan conversion; exposure to sports events and teams are the primary conversion methods explored. As such, the current study aims to contribute to the literature, by exploring what specifically about athletes draws non-fans into sports.

Fan Engagement

Fan engagement is unique in its almost irrational nature, unlike any form of customer engagement, fans exhibit continued support regardless of results, making this an essential aspect of sports management. The term widely used within the sports management and marketing, refers to the psychological connection and consequent behaviours that a fan has with a sports team, or athlete, often going beyond transactional actions (Vale and Fernandes, 2018; Yoshida et al., 2014). Although traditionally classified as a form of customer engagement within sports (Yoshida et al., 2014), fan engagement exhibits certain traits that would not be granted when considering traditional brands. The enduring loyalty that fans hold towards their teams, independent of results and even during downfalls, is considered as a rather irrational behaviour, almost unique to sports fans (Vale and Fernandes, 2018).

Fan engagement can typically be classified into two types: transactional and non-transactional engagement. Transactional engagement focuses on behaviours involving a direct exchange of value – usually money – such as buying tickets, merchandise, or paying for a subscription, considered self-interested activities (Kim, 2021; Yoshida et al., 2014). Non-transactional engagement on the other hand refers to voluntary behaviours that reflect a sport

consumer's "extra role" (Yoshida et al., 2014); these are behaviours that benefit team image and fan communities, and include exchanges of knowledge, word-of-mouth, content creation, enduring loyalty and support.

The development of social technologies, particularly social media, has increased the opportunities for non-transactional engagement. The COBRA (Consumption, Contribution, Creation) framework (Vale and Fernandes, 2018) considers aspects such as interactive participation and content creation as key elements of high-level fan engagement.

Mahmoudian et al. (2021) provide further evidence that engagement with athletes on social media can also lead to greater loyalty among existing fans.

For Gen Z, who are regular social media users (Kollárová and Niklová, 2025), social media usage intensity may result in different exposure to personally relevant athlete content. For non-fans who may lack sport knowledge, content associated with appearance and lifestyle athlete attributes is likely to be more accessible and personally relevant (Cortés, 2025; Magano, Szczygiel and Au-Yong-Oliveira, 2024). Heavy social media users are therefore more likely to encounter lifestyle content repeatedly, strengthening its perceived relevance. Whilst social media usage intensity varies in non-fan contexts, given the importance of such media and the affinity for it by Gen Z individuals, its moderating role is examined as a possible addition to current engagement literature, giving way to the following hypothesis:

H5: Social media intensity moderates the relationship between marketable lifestyle attributes and initial engagement intentions, such that higher intensity strengthens this relationship.

Existing research has not yet examined how the athlete brand image attributes guide personal relevance amongst non-fans and any effects on subsequent engagement intentions, making the present study a relevant contribution to the existing literature.

Following the review of the literature and the development of the hypotheses, the conceptual model below was developed to guide the research of this study.

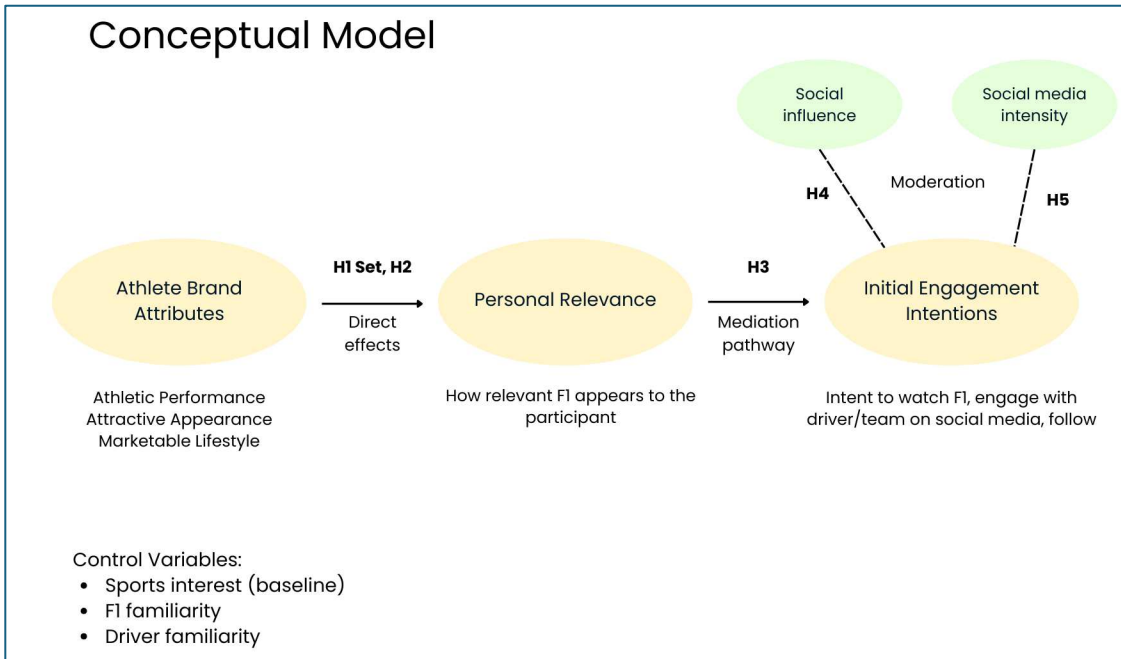


Figure 3 Research Conceptual Model (Author's own elaboration)

Table 2: Compilation of hypotheses, associated themes and variables (Author's own elaboration)

Theme	Hypothesis	Variables
MAIN EFFECTS: Attributes & Relevance	<p>H1_a: Athletic performance attributes of F1 athletes have a positive impact on perceived personal relevance of F1 amongst Gen Z non-fans</p> <p>H1_b: Attractive appearance attributes of F1 athletes have a positive impact on perceived personal relevance of F1 amongst Gen Z non-fans</p> <p>H1_c: Marketable lifestyle attributes of F1 athletes have a positive impact on perceived personal relevance of F1 amongst Gen Z non-fans</p>	<p>IVs: Athletic performance, attractive appearance, marketable lifestyle</p> <p>DV: personal relevance</p>
COMPARATIVE EXPECTATION: Attribute Salience	<p>H2: Among the three athlete brand attributes, marketable lifestyle is expected to show a stronger positive association with perceived personal relevance than athletic performance and attractive appearance.</p>	<p>IVs: Athlete brand attributes individually</p> <p>DV: Personal relevance</p>
MEDIATION: Personal Relevance Pathway	<p>H3: Personal relevance functions as a mediating mechanism in the relationship between brand attributes and initial engagement intentions amongst gen z non-fans</p>	<p>IVs: Athlete brand attributes</p> <p>Mediator: Personal relevance</p> <p>DV: Engagement intentions</p>
MODERATION: Social influence	<p>H4: Social influence acts as a moderator in the relationship between personal relevance and initial engagement intentions</p>	<p>IV: Personal relevance</p> <p>Moderator: Social Influence</p> <p>DV: Engagement intentions</p>
MODERATION: Social media usage intensity	<p>H5: Social media intensity moderates the relationship between marketable lifestyle attributes and initial engagement intentions, such that higher intensity strengthens this relationship.</p>	<p>IV: Marketable lifestyle attribute</p> <p>Moderator: Social media intensity</p> <p>DV: Engagement intentions</p>

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Relevance

This study explores the impact that athletes have on converting non-fans into sports fans within the context of Formula 1, a sport that has experienced considerable global growth in recent years. Whilst the sport benefits from an increasingly younger fanbase, particularly due to social media and the series “Drive to Survive”, this demographic is still underexplored, particularly in relation to fan conversion. As sports fandom is typically regarded as beginning in childhood, exploring its development amongst non-fan adults aims to fill a gap in the literature.

Furthermore, the study of athletes as drivers of conversion for sports fandom remains limited in the sports management and marketing literature. Given the focal nature of athletes in a sport such as Formula 1, as well as the impact they have on a societal level – including aspects like social media presence – presents an opportunity to investigate the effect they have on converting non-fans. An important consideration for this research is the media consumption habits of Gen Z, who are avid social media users. As such, this research aims to examine causal effects between exposure to athlete image attributes, predominantly through social media, and the effect on fan conversion and its subsequent engagement intentions.

3.2. Research Approach

The research is of deductive nature and follows a quantitative approach, driven by hypotheses which were deduced based on pre-existing knowledge of the key subjects (Bryman and Bell, 2011), as referenced in the literature review. As this study aims to explore a causal impact between independent and dependent variables, a quantitative approach is best suited for a systematic study of relationships between variables and allows for pattern observation and the quantification of data and testing of theories (Bryman and Bell, 2011; Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Additionally, quantitative approaches have a higher concern for representativeness and providing a summary of multiple characteristics (Hair, Page and Brunsveld, 2020), making it an adequate path for investigating behaviours and attitudes related of a generation.

An experimental survey design was chosen as it allowed for the manipulation of variables, such as athlete brand image attributes, by exposing participants to video vignettes depicting each of the three attribute dimensions. Vignette questions anchor a choice/answer in a

specific situation and allow for replies with a higher degree of consideration (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Personal relevance and initial engagement intentions were measured as outcome variables after the vignette, which allowed the researcher to assess how different attributes influenced respondent attitudes.

3.3. Data Collection Methods

A key aspect of this research was identifying the relationship between athlete image attributes and their individual effect on personal relevance of F1, making them an important variable to be analysed. As such, the experimental data were gathered by manipulating these variables. Presented as visual vignettes, the survey employed a randomised, between-subject structure for each experimental condition.

Each condition consisted of one athlete's brand image attributes – athletic performance, attractive appearance, or marketable lifestyle. The vignettes were drawn from a chosen F1 athlete's TikTok account, ensuring each post emphasised a distinct attribute. To maintain internal validity, ensuring that only the athlete attributes were the differing variables, only one athlete was chosen. Whilst this procedure diminishes the realism of the Formula 1 context – different athletes may be more strongly associated with different attributes – it maximises the experimental control and reduces the impact of external variables, making causality clearer. Additionally, to minimise systematic bias, participants were randomly assigned to a vignette condition.

The online survey, conducted on the Qualtrics platform, consisted of 3 distinct main sections: (1) screening and general opinions, (2) the experimental condition using the vignettes and the subsequent effect on affinity towards sports after exposure, and (3) near-term engagement intentions; a demographics section was included at the end of the survey (see Appendix 7.1.1). The first section consisted of screening questions to determine eligibility, ensuring that participants were within the desired ages (18-30) and identified as non-fans or low engagement participants. This section also included questions to assess any pre-existing attitudes towards Formula 1 and athlete brand image attributes; this provided an opportunity to control and minimise selection bias, as well as to establish pre-treatment attitudes. As mentioned above, measurement scales that addressed the concept of athlete brand image were adapted from existing research (Arai, Ko and Kaplanidou, 2013).

The second section focused on the experimental condition and exposure to the vignettes. Given the experiment's aim of exploring the impact of athlete image attributes, only one athlete was chosen, although more had been considered. A single-athlete design minimised the possibility of external, non-detectable attributes to have influenced responses, thus increasing reliability. Each vignette manipulated a specific attribute, and they were randomised evenly to ensure each option was seen the same number of times by all respondents. Following exposure to the vignettes, respondents were asked questions on their attitude and affinity towards the athlete.

Finally, the third crucial section explored engagement intentions considering exposure to the vignette. Near-term engagement was measured as "behavioural micro-intentions" to maintain validity, as long-term commitment would not be plausible after exposure to a single athlete message. Therefore, lower-barrier behaviours were investigated, such as social media engagement, information-seeking, and short-term viewing intentions, making these both athlete- and sport-specific intentions.

As this study deals with attitudes and opinions, the scales used to measure these aspects were seven-point Likert scales. As a multiple-indicator measure, Likert scales allow for a wider range of facets of the underlying concept to be explored, capturing subtle differences, whilst making it viable for possible anomalies to be offset (Bryman and Bell, 2011). This scale format also matches the measurement items from which this study adapted, namely, Arai, Ko and Kaplanidou (2013).

Numerical scales were also used in the first section to understand any prior familiarity with the featured athlete and the sport itself. These types of scales are also typically used to measure behavioural intentions (Hair, Page and Brunsveld, 2020), an essential measure for this project, and were therefore, used in the third section. An attention check question was included to ensure data reliability.

To ensure validity and maintain reliability several measures were employed. First, through adapting measurement scales regarding the independent variable – athlete brand image attributes – from established published frameworks, ensures validity as the measures confidently reflect the relevant concept, an important feature for this type of research (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Additionally, a pilot survey was conducted with a convenience sample to evaluate question comprehension and test stability, where the results informed any necessary revisions. Finally, the survey was administered in the same way to all participants,

independently of the vignette they were exposed to, with a randomisation procedure to ensure an equal group sizing, reducing any imbalance and random errors.

3.4. Study Population and Sampling

Given the study's focus on younger audiences, specifically Gen Z, and those who are not current formula 1 fans, the population under consideration constitutes of individuals aged between 18 and 30, who have not watched more than 2 Grand Prix over the 2024 and 2025 season each. This time frame was chosen to minimise incidental exposure to the sport, thus excluding individuals with consistent viewing habits. It is worth noting that whilst the consensus on Gen Z, as a generation, ranges from 1997-2012 (Dimock, 2019), to comply with ethical standards when researching human objects, only participants aged 18 and over were considered as a sample for this study.

A non-probabilistic sampling method was used, specifically convenience sampling, as the survey was circulated amongst contacts available to the researcher (Bryman and Bell, 2011), namely the researcher's personal network and online platforms. Although this limits the application of this study's findings, a convenience sampling facilitates reaching a specific target group like Gen Z non-fans.

3.5. Data analysis methodology

All data analysis was carried out using SPSS 30.0. Due to the focal demographic of this study, data was cleaned to only include Gen Z who were not considered Formula 1 fans – a total of 536 responses were obtained, with 406 being non-fans and completing the full survey. An additional elimination was carried out – participants who had not correctly answered the attention check question were discarded to maximise data quality, leaving a total of 390 responses that were utilized for the data analysis. Additionally, any items that were on a reverse Likert scale (i.e. "Formula 1 does not seem more relevant to me now") were reverse coded to ensure data accuracy.

4. Data Analysis & Results

The study sample consisted of 390 Gen Z non-fans, with a balanced demographic composition. Most participants (65.9%) fell within the 18-25 age bracket, representing the lower end of the Gen Z bracket. The sample was nearly evenly split between female (51.3%) and male (44.9%) respondents, with a small minority identifying as other or not disclosing their gender. The high proportion of female respondents is particularly interesting, not only due to the sport's historical male domination, but also due to documented growth of F1 among the female Gen Z demographic (Domenicali and Allen, 2025).

The sample was geographically diverse, with a concentration in English-speaking and European markets, although Portugal represented the largest single nationality at 31.8%. The United States also exhibited a considerable portion of participants at 18.2%, being especially relevant as this is one of the fastest growing markets in Formula 1.

Finally, there was a near-equal split across the three vignette conditions as demonstrated in Table 3, with the small differences accounting for removed data due to incorrect attention check answers. This balanced distribution confirms the integrity of the randomization procedure and minimizes the risk of selection bias influencing responses across experimental groups.

Table 3: Sample Characteristics (author's own elaboration)

Characteristic	N	%
Age		
18-25	257	65.9
26-30	133	34.1
Gender		
Female	200	51.3
Male	175	44.9
Other/Prefer not to say	15	3.9
Nationality		
Portugal	124	31.8

United States	71	18.2
United Kingdom	41	10.5
Germany	22	5.6
Other	132	33.8
Vignette Condition		
Athletic Performance	130	33.3
Attractive Appearance	131	33.6
Marketable Lifestyle	129	33.1

Prior to any hypothesis analysis, reliability checks were conducted for all multiple-item variables: the athlete image attributes, existing sports interest, social influence, personal relevance, and engagement intentions. For this, a Cronbach's Alpha of $\alpha \geq .70$ was considered an acceptable measure of reliability (Hussey et al., 2025). with .75 or higher being ideal, which would mean that variance is predominantly caused by the construct itself. Certain scales showed low reliability with all items, and as such some items were removed. This was the case for *athletic performance* where α was .607 and then .785 once the 4th item was removed; *attractive appearance* where the 4th item was removed, taking the α from .627 to .758; *marketable lifestyle* where $\alpha = .512$ with all items included, and $\alpha = .778$ once the 4th item was removed; for *personal relevance* the 4th item was also removed, increasing Cronbach's Alpha from .674 to .908. For other scales, all items showed sufficient reliability: *engagement intentions* $\alpha = .904$, *existing sports interest* $\alpha = .886$, and *social influence* $\alpha = .803$.

Table 4: Descriptives and Reliability of Multi-item variables (author's own conception)

Construct	Mean	SD	α
Athletic Performance	5.677	.949	.785
Attractive Appearance	5.476	1.010	.698
Marketable Lifestyle	5.271	1.147	.778
Personal Relevance	4.947	1.427	.908
Engagement Intentions	4.430	1.596	.904
Social Influence	4.733	1.140	.886
Initial Sports Interest	5.003	1.347	.803

Once reliability checks were conducted, composite scores of all multiple-item scales were computed with the relevant items. While removing some items may have limited the content coverage of respective scales, this was done to ensure maximum internal consistency and scale coherence when testing hypotheses. This trade-off between reliability and content coverage is a limitation of the study and something to be considered for future research, by refining the scale and validating it further.

The following operational model was revised from the conceptual model to better illustrate the structure of the study and analysis.

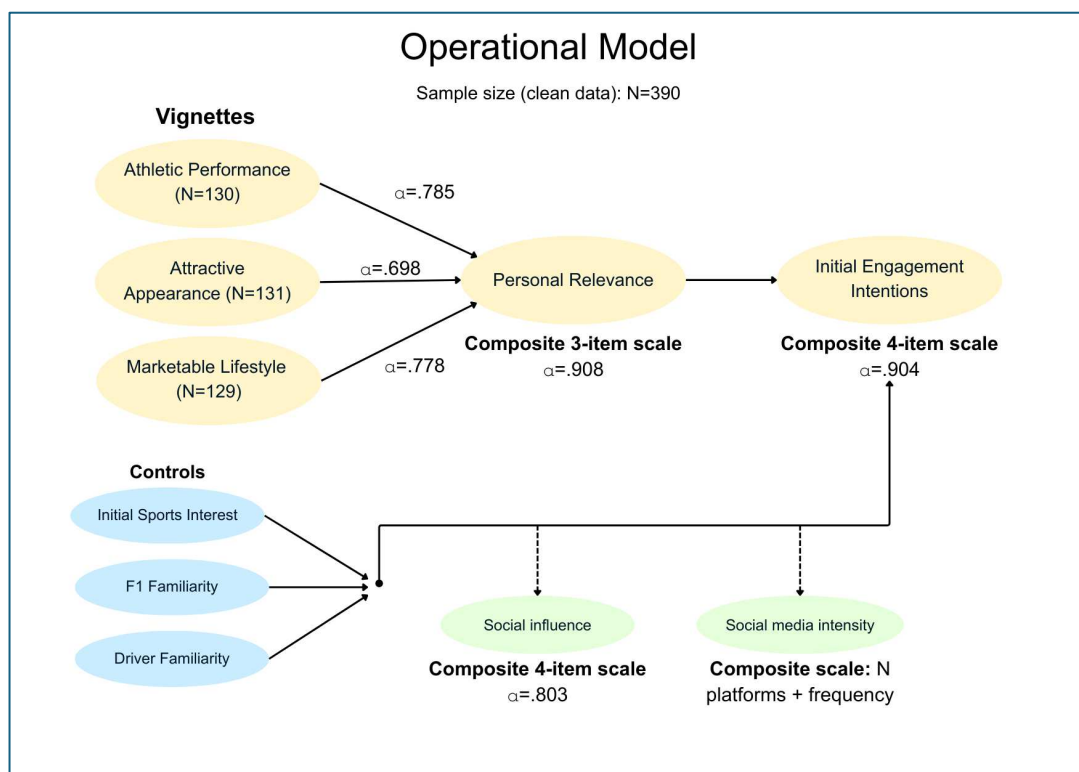


Figure 4: Operational Model of the Analysis (author's own elaboration)

To test the first set of hypotheses, a hierarchical linear regression was conducted for each attribute using the Enter method. Initial sports interest, F1 familiarity, and driver familiarity were used as controls in Block 1, and athlete attributes were input in Block 2. Personal relevance was the dependent variable. Given the nature of a vignette study, the linear regression had to be carried out separately for each vignette condition as participants had answered vignette-specific questions.

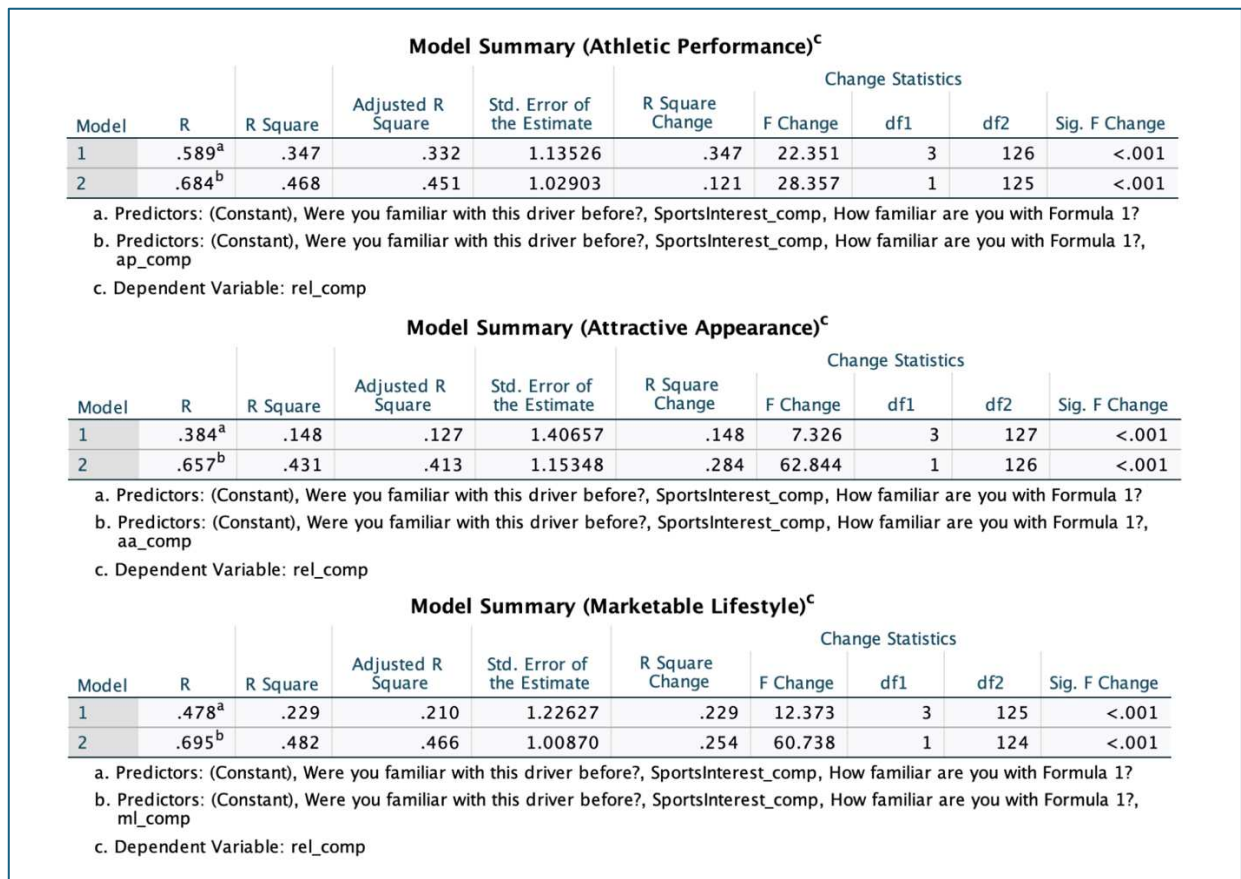


Figure 5: Regression Model Summaries of individual athlete attributes (SPSS & Author's own elaboration)

H1_a: Athletic performance attributes of F1 athletes have a positive impact on perceived personal relevance of F1 amongst Gen Z non-fans

130 participants viewed the vignette that portrayed the athletic performance dimension. In this model, the control variables accounted for about 34.7% of variance in personal relevance, evidenced through the $R^2 = .347$ which was statistically significant at $p < .001$. By including athletic performance, the R^2 increased to .468, thereby explaining an additional 12.1% of variance. As seen through the standardised beta (β), all predictors – control variables and the independent variable – were positive and statistically significant, with the athletic performance attribute exhibiting the strongest effect, albeit by a slight difference, in the model with $\beta = .383$ and $p < .001$. Furthermore, athletic performance and personal relevance presented a moderate positive correlation of .554 with $p < 0.001$.

H1_a. can be accepted.

H1_b: Attractive appearance attributes of F1 athletes have a positive impact on the perceived personal relevance of F1 amongst Gen Z non-fans

The attractive appearance vignette was shown to a total of 131 participants. When carrying out the linear regression with attractive appearance as the independent variable, the control variables explained only 14.8% of variance in personal relevance ($R^2 = .148$, $p < .001$), whereas the focal athlete brand attribute increased the R^2 to .431, showing a ΔR^2 of .284, with the F-change proving to be statistically significant at $p < .001$. In this model, existing interest in sports no longer became a significant predictor for personal relevance; the two familiarity control variables were significant. The athlete image attribute, attractive appearance, showed a very strong positive effect with $\beta = .557$ and $p < .001$. This is in clear support of H1.2, where perceived attractive appearance predicts higher personal relevance. Additionally, attractive appearance exhibits a significant positive correlation with personal relevance of .579.

H1_b. can be accepted.

H1_c: Marketable lifestyle attributes of F1 athletes have a positive impact perceived personal relevance of F1 amongst Gen Z non-fans

The marketable lifestyle vignette sample consisted of 129 participants. In Block 1 of this model, considering only the control variables, 22.9% of the variance in personal relevance was explained ($R^2 = .229$, $p < .001$). The addition of marketable lifestyle into the model caused a ΔR^2 of .254, explaining an additional 25.4% variance beyond existing interest in sports and familiarity with the driver or F1. In relation to predictor strength and significance, of the control variables, only sports interested exhibited a marginal significance where $\beta = .177$ and $p = .056$, the other control variables were non-significant. The independent variable marketable lifestyle emerged as a strong positive predictor with $\beta = .552$ and $p < .001$, making it the leading variable in the model, and thus supporting H1.3. A robust and significant correlation ($r = .654$ and $p < .001$) between marketable lifestyle attributes and personal relevance was also identified.

H1_c can be accepted.

H2: Among the three athlete brand attributes, marketable lifestyle is expected to show a stronger positive association with perceived personal relevance than athletic performance and attractive appearance.

The linear regressions carried out to test for the first set of hypotheses also tested H2. The key metrics to consider were the standardised betas and the additional variance (ΔR^2) that each individual attribute explained when controls were entered into the model. This provided indicative evidence of the relative salience of athlete attributes in shaping perceived personal relevance. *Athletic appearance* and *marketable lifestyle* emerged as the strongest predictors for personal relevance with $\Delta R^2 = .284$ and $\beta = .557$, and $\Delta R^2 = .254$ and $\beta = .552$, respectively. This is comparatively higher than the results evidenced in athletic performance where $\Delta R^2 = .121$ and $\beta = .383$. Additionally, whilst all attributes correlate positively with personal relevance, marketable lifestyle exhibited the strongest correlation at $r = .654$. These differences should however, be interpreted with caution as the comparisons are based on separate regression models, not direct statistical contrasts.

As such, H2 is not supported in its original form; *attractive appearance* shows the highest positive association, followed by *marketable lifestyle*, and only then *athletic performance*. The observed results and patterns offer a descriptive insight into the behaviour of non-fans and how this demographic may respond differently when facing distinct athlete image attributes.

H3: Personal relevance functions as a mediating mechanism in the relationship between athlete brand attributes and initial engagement intentions amongst Gen Z non-fans

To test for this hypothesis the initial regressions were also utilised as the results were key in explaining the pathway from attribute to personal relevance.

Subsequently, another regression was conducted for each attribute, where relevance was also input into the model alongside the attribute as an independent variable (in Block 2) and engagement intentions became the dependent variable. The control variables remained the same.

Athletic Performance

For this athlete brand image dimension, the control variables accounted for a 25% variance in engagement intentions ($R^2 = .250$ and $p < .001$). Once the attribute and relevance were input into the model, an additional 36% increase in variance was evidenced, increasing R^2 to .610. With all variables considered, personal relevance emerged as the strongest predictor for

engagement intentions with $\beta = .653$ ($p < .001$); *athletic performance* also exhibited a small but significant effect on engagement intentions ($\beta = .152$ and $p = .028$). In this model, relevance correlated more strongly with engagement intentions ($r = .746$, $p < .001$) than the attribute, although it still exhibited a moderate, significant ($p < .001$) correlation at $r = .506$.

Through this model alone, relevance indicates partial mediation of engagement intentions, as the attribute still accounts for a small, direct path to initial engagement intentions.

Attractive Appearance

When considering the appearance dimension of the athlete brand image, control variables explained only 11.4% of variance in engagement intentions ($R^2 = .114$ and $p = .001$), whereas when relevance and *attractive appearance* were included in the model, variance jumped to 71.5% ($R^2 = .715$), corresponding to a ΔR^2 of .600 ($p < .001$), a considerable increase.

Furthermore, when both the independent variables were put into the model, only personal relevance arose as a very strong and significant predictor of engagement intentions with $\beta = .799$ and $p < .001$. All control variables and *attractive appearance* showed a very small effect on engagement intentions and were non-significant. Similarly, relevance had a stronger correlation with intentions than the attribute, which still had a moderate correlation, at $r = .841$ and $r = .526$, respectively.

Personal relevance is the dominant predictor, and as such consistent with being a full mediator for engagement intentions. This is in support of H3.

Marketable Lifestyle

In the model with *marketable lifestyle*, the control variables accounted for 24.3% of variance in engagement intentions ($R^2 = .243$ and $p = .001$). When adding in *marketable lifestyle* and personal relevance, variance increased by 44.2% ($\Delta R^2 = .442$, $p < .001$) to 68.5%. The standardised betas, similarly to *attractive appearance*, showed that relevance was the full mediator for engagement intentions, with $\beta = .743$ and $p < .001$. Personal relevance, once again, displayed a higher correlation with intention at $r = .773$, and marketable lifestyle displayed, still, a moderate correlation at $r = .536$. This model supports H3.

Based on the regressions carried out, across the three vignette conditions, the results consistently supported the proposed mediating path of attribute \rightarrow personal relevance \rightarrow initial engagement intentions, indicating the important role that personal relevance plays in connecting athlete brand attributes to initial engagement intentions. The individual attributes'

effects heavily diminish once personal relevance is entered into the model, disappearing completely for *marketable lifestyle* and *attractive appearance*, and being reduced to a small residual effect for *athletic performance*. Whilst a formal test of indirect effects was not conducted, the observed pattern of relationships indicates that H3 is supported, suggesting that personal relevance is an important pathway through which athlete attributes influence initial engagement intentions amongst Gen Z non-fans.

H4: Social influence acts as a moderator in the relationship between personal relevance and initial engagement intentions

In order to test this hypothesis, another regression was carried out. However, as this aimed to investigate a moderating effect, several steps had to be carried out prior. The control variables were maintained; as a moderating relationship was being investigated, an interaction term had to be computed; this followed the standard approach outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986). Before doing so, the composite score for social influence was mean-centred; personal relevance was also mean-centred. Mean-centering was done to minimise multicollinearity and to make coefficients more easily interpretable. Finally, an interaction term between social influence and personal relevance was computed.

When put into the regression model, the two centred variables were added into Block 2, and the interaction term was added into Block 3. In this model, the control variables explained 19.6% of variance in engagement intentions, and social influence and personal relevance raised the variance to 65.8% ($\Delta R^2 = .462$, $p < .001$). The interaction term showed no significant moderation with $\Delta R^2 = .001$ and $p = .394$. This was supported by the standardised beta coefficients: personal relevance emerged again with a strong positive effect on engagement intentions ($\beta = .718$, $p < .001$), social influence had a small positive, yet significant, effect ($\beta = .103$, $p = .002$), but the interaction between the two showed no effect ($\beta = -.027$, $p = .394$).

Thereby, H4 is rejected and social influence does not act as a moderator between personal relevance and engagement intentions, but rather as an additional, independent predictor.

H5: Social media intensity moderates the relationship between marketable lifestyle attributes and initial engagement intentions, such that higher intensity strengthens this relationship.

To test this hypothesis, a social media intensity composite score was computed by combining number of social media platforms used, and frequency of social media usage.

Similarly as above, the variables relevant for testing this hypothesis had to be mean-centred – this was done for the *marketable lifestyle* attribute and social media usage intensity. An interaction term between *marketable lifestyle* and social media intensity was then computed; this was also carried out for the other athlete brand attributes for exploratory purposes.

The regression model carried out was hierarchical in nature, with 3 blocks. The control variables explained 24.3% of variance in engagement intentions ($R^2 = .243$, $p < .001$). When *marketable lifestyle* and personal relevance were added into the model, variance was raised to 40.6% ($\Delta R^2 = .162$, $p < .001$). *Marketable lifestyle* was a moderate positive predictor of engagement intentions ($\beta = .478$, $p < .001$), however, social media usage intensity provided a small negative, but non-significant effect ($\beta = -.081$, $p = .259$). After the interaction term was considered, variance was only raised by 1.5% but not statistically significant ($\Delta R^2 = .015$, $p = .079$). This was evidenced at a coefficient level too where $\beta = .137$, $p = .079$.

As such, H5 is not supported, whilst *marketable lifestyle* has a clear and direct effect on intentions, its strength is not dictated by social media usage intensity. The same regression was carried out for the other attributes, and the findings echoed the above: social media intensity did not significantly moderate any of the athlete brand attributes to positively affect engagement intentions.

5. Discussion

This study aimed to explore how athlete brand image attributes have the capacity to serve as catalysts for early fan engagement amongst Gen Z non-fans, a demographic previously overlooked in sports marketing research despite their growth contribution to Formula 1 audiences (Domenicali and Allen, 2025). This was done through an experimental vignette study, where equally distributed survey participants were exposed to a single vignette which expressed one of the three athlete brand image attributes: athletic performance, attractive appearance, and marketable lifestyle (Arai, Ko and Kaplanidou, 2013). As fandom is considered a journey and something that is developed over time (Tamir, 2020; Wann and James, 2019) and this was a cross-sectional study, fandom conversion was limited to an initial stage of awareness and attraction (Wann and James, 2019) capturing perceived personal relevance and initial engagement intentions (i.e. following the athlete on social media, or watching a Formula 1 race).

5.1. Theme 1: Athlete Brand Image Attributes and their effect

As the athlete brand is key for developing a psychological attachment to an athlete amongst sports fans (Arai, Ko and Kaplanidou, 2013), examining their effect on personal relevance amongst non-fans was imperative. The regressions carried out showed that all three separate attributes were positively correlated with personal relevance. Notably, *attractive appearance* explained the highest variability in personal relevance, whilst *marketable lifestyle* had a marginally similar effect. In their respective experimental conditions, both off-track attributes substantially outperformed *athletic performance* when linked to personal relevance.

These findings diverge meaningfully from the existing literature which emphasises the importance that on-field attributes play amongst affinity for an athlete (Doyle, Su and Kunkel, 2022; Harasta, 2021; Hasaan et al., 2016). Nevertheless, it is important to note that an extent of existing research was done on sports fans. Thus, the current findings begin to shed light on the specific aspects of an athlete brand that draw in non-fans, within Formula 1. Accordingly, based on the patterns observed, it is suggested that off-track attributes function as stronger initial drivers of perceived personal relevance amongst Gen Z non-fans, though a longitudinal study design would provide further insights on a clear ranking of these attributes.

In the present study, *attractive appearance* appeared as the attribute with the strongest association to personal relevance, followed by *marketable lifestyle* and only then, *athletic performance*; this contrasts with the MABI (Arai, Ko and Kaplanidou, 2013) in which *attractive appearance* appeared as the weakest constituent of the athlete brand image amongst sports fans. It is, however, consistent with findings that point to the importance of off-field attributes, particularly lifestyle aspects, in creating an emotional connection and developing loyalty amongst athletes' audiences (Hasaan et al., 2018; Na, Kunkel and Doyle, 2020). Importantly, while off-track attributes dominate at the initial engagement stage, athletic performance remains a meaningful predictor, indicating that non-fans are not indifferent to athlete skill. Rather, it becomes a secondary consideration when relatability and personal relevance are absent.

5.2. Theme 2: The mechanism of Personal Relevance

Across all athlete image attributes, personal relevance was identified as a strong predictor of initial engagement intentions, with important nuances worth mentioning. Personal relevance was the strongest predictor of engagement intentions within the *attractive appearance*

subgroup, slightly weaker within the *marketable lifestyle* subgroup, and weakest amongst participants who were exposed to the *athletic performance* vignette. This variation in mediation strength may reflect that appearance-based attributes require less cognitive effort to process and evaluate, allowing personal relevance to translate more directly into engagement intentions, whereas athletic content may introduce additional cognitive barriers which require sports knowledge, subtly weakening the relevance-intention pathway.

Whilst athletic aspects are of key importance amongst established sports fans and their affinity towards athletes, these findings reflect key elements of the literature on sports fan development. Funk and James' Psychological Continuum Model (2001) and Fan Attitude Network Model (FAN) (Funk and James, 2004) posit that attitudes towards sports objects occur in stages, all through which people pass, deepening their attachment to a sports object (Wann and James, 2019, p. 26). Critically, the present study captures the awareness-attraction transition within the PCM, where dispositional needs, motivators that promote self-identification (Funk and James, 2004), are the primary drivers. This closely aligns with more appearance-based cues such as *attractive appearance* and *marketable lifestyle* attributes; these are more ambiguous and subjective items, where non-fans may begin to develop a psychological connection if they feel they have shared aesthetics, personal stories, and values.

In contrast, *athletic performance* requires deeper contextual knowledge, situating it as a weaker entry point at an early developmental stage. This idea also closely aligns with social identity theory, which postulates that identification to an object is done out of a desire to maintain, or elevate, one's self-esteem, through comparison with relevant groups (Koo et al., 2025; Tajfel and Turner, 1979). As such, relatability may be a key aspect when employing visual/appearance cues as part of a branding strategy, to drive engagement within a wider audience.

5.3. Theme 3: The Social Aspect of Sports and Gen Z

Sports are, often, a social activity, whether individuals are partaking in an activity or at an event as spectators. Socialisation is also a key player in the path of non-fan to fan (Wann and James, 2019, p. 35). Additionally, it is vital to consider the focal demographic of this study – Gen Z, a digital native, one that uses social media to discover new interests and form opinions (Jiang et al., 2025), and one whom, within Formula 1, is discovering it through

digital platforms too (Domenicali and Allen, 2025). Two sub-themes have therefore been devised.

5.3.1. The Role of Social Influence

Across the literature, social influence is identified as an important aspect in the fan journey; family, and especially paternal figures, often have a predominant influence when fandom is introduced from a young age (Tamir, 2020), but friends, and other close acquaintances also act as influential agents in developing a relationship with sports objects (Wann and James, 2019, pp. 35-39). Therefore, it was hypothesised that social influence would moderate the personal relevance → initial engagement intentions pathway. Although participants reported being moderately influenced by those around them when considering following a sport/athlete (M = 4.73 on a scale of 1-7), social influence did not amplify the effect of personal relevance on engagement intentions as hypothesised.

Instead, social influence operated as an independent, direct predictor of engagement intentions, suggesting that peer influence and personal relevance operate through separate mechanisms during initial engagement, rather than peer pressure amplifying the effect of personal relevance. This finding aligns with the PCM, which suggests that at early stages, awareness and attraction, dispositional needs dominate, while external factors only become more influential after a psychological attachment is developed (Funk and James, 2001). Within this study's cross-sectional sample, at an initial stage of awareness where personal relevance is the primary driver, social influence did not noticeably amplify the relationship to engagement intentions, though it did maintain an independent role in predicting engagement.

5.3.2. Sports on a Digital Stage

Social media and digital platforms are an integral part of Gen Z's everyday lives, including sports, dictating not only how it is consumed, but also acting as a new entry point (Domenicali and Allen, 2025). Survey participants demonstrated a strong adherence to social media, with 75% reporting daily social media usage and 57% being present on at least three different social media platforms, reflecting the literature on this generation's behaviours.

Social media was investigated as a moderator between *marketable lifestyle* and engagement intentions, as the type of content associated with this attribute often promotes fan engagement, fosters community, and increases salience of an athlete's personal brand through relatability (Taniyev, Mayer and Gordon, 2022). Social media usage intensity, however, did

not act moderate the relationship between *marketable lifestyle* and engagement intentions. Notably, social media intensity showed a small negative, non-significant association with engagement intentions when entered as a direct predictor, which contradicts expectations. An exploratory analysis of the remaining dimensions of the MABI confirmed that social media intensity did not significantly moderate any attribute-to-intention pathway. This unexpected finding likely reflects a methodological limitation: participants were exposed to a single vignette only; a one-time exposure event does not reflect the real-world context of repeated exposure on social media.

In natural social media settings, heavy users would likely encounter lifestyle content repeatedly across a longer period, potentially amplifying its effects. A cross-sectional, single-exposure design cannot capture this process. Future research employing longitudinal designs or multiple exposures over time would better clarify whether social media intensity moderates athlete brand effects in more accurate conditions.

6. Conclusion, Limitations, and Future Direction

6.1. Conclusion

A bulk of sports marketing literature is focused on the behaviour of established fans and their attitudes towards sports objects, largely because fandom is considered a journey established at a young age. However, with new forms of media, such as sports docuseries, paving the way for a new generation of fans, it becomes essential to explore this new demographic. The present study aimed to investigate how non-fans begin to engage with a new sport, namely Formula 1.

All athlete attributes were found to have a significant positive effect on personal relevance among non-fans, with off-track attributes establishing the strongest links to both personal relevance and engagement intentions; indicating that non-fans start to engage through non-athletic visual items that are deemed self-relevant. Personal relevance appeared as a strong predictor and mediating mechanism of linking athlete attributes with initial engagement intentions, highlighting the need for non-fans to find points of attachment to athletes to drive an initial engagement with the sport. Additionally, social influence was found to be a positive predictor of engagement intentions, accentuating the social aspects of becoming a fan at an

independent level. Adversely, social influence did not amplify the effects of personal relevance on engagement intentions as hypothesised.

Similarly, social media usage intensity did not moderate any attribute-to-engagement relationship, although this may in part, arise from the experiment's cross-sectional design. Furthermore, some expected differences between the attributes – derived from the literature – were not as distinct as theorised; a key point being that previous research was carried out on fans, whilst the present study on non-fans, thereby justifying these differences and laying the groundwork for future research. This suggests that Gen Z non-fans may more promptly respond to easily observable cues that are personally relatable, rather than athletic cues which may require a deeper, contextual knowledge about the sport.

6.2. Contributions and Practical Implications

This paper extends the literature in a direction that is under-researched, by focusing on the non-fan Gen Z demographic, and how athletes themselves act as drivers of interest in a sport. Much of the previous literature focused on fandom centres on existing fans, and the behaviours and attitudes of this group. This study sheds a light on the earlier stages of the fan journey amongst young adults, establishing evidence that personal relevance is of key importance and peer-influence, at such an initial stage, operates only as a predictor and not a moderator of intention to engage. The present work links to existing literature on fan identity theories, where self-identification and -connection with sports objects result in stronger engaging behaviours (Koo et al., 2025). Where the aforementioned research looks at established fans, the current study contributes by identifying a self-linking process, before self-identification is strong, where non-fans view an athlete as personally relevant and as such are influenced to follow and engage.

Similarly, athlete-oriented literature predominantly studies existing fans, and the behavioural influence that athletes have on this specific group. In a sport as competitive as Formula 1, where (at present time) only 20 drivers make it to the top level and as such are representatives of their sport, this study gained an insight on athletes' ability as influencers to be an entry point into a sport. By extending the MABI (Arai, Ko and Kaplanidou, 2013) to the non-fan demographic, the findings suggest that these athlete brand dimensions work through perceived personal relevance to influence engagement and the differences in attribute strengths between sports fans and non-sports fans are highlighted.

On a managerial level, this study suggests that marketing strategies involving athletes and aiming to reach a wider audience beyond an existing fanbase, should strategically lead with lifestyle and appearance-oriented content to enhance personal relevance. Off-track attributes are more accessible entry points because they require minimal sport-specific knowledge, allowing non-fans to immediately assess if they relate to an athlete's lifestyle, values, fashion without needing to understand the technical context or competitive dynamics of Formula 1. The technical knowledge required to resonate with *athletic performance* creates a barrier for non-fans. The data show that off-track attributes drive stronger personal relevance than on-track attributes, and that personal relevance directly predicts engagement intentions. Still, the importance of athletic content is recognised in a field where athleticism is an integral factor.

Therefore, a segmented content strategy that balances on and off-track content is recommended: leading with humanising, lifestyle-based storytelling and visual content will spark initial relevance among potential fans. As personal relevance develops, gradually introducing athletic context and technical achievements will deepen engagement. This approach respects the pathway non-fans follow from initial awareness to attraction, before being introduced to sport-specific content. While athletic content remains vital for the sport itself and for existing fans, in early-stage conversion campaigns it is recommended to remain secondary when targeting non-fans.

By employing humanising storytelling and content that ties to an individual's self-expression, such as aesthetics or values, marketing teams can achieve a deeper degree of personal relevance amongst low-interest audiences. A combined approach to content and marketing strategies respects the needs of the two audiences, and allows brands, teams, and athletes within F1 to connect with new audiences whilst still aligning with the essence of a sports-related entity.

6.3. Limitations and Future Research

The present study did not come without limitations. An important aspect to consider, is that this study focused only on Gen Z non-fans aged from 18-30, and as such, does not take into consideration other generations who are non-fans. It should be noted though, that the majority of new F1 fans, following the sport for 2 years or less, are below 25 (Domenicali and Allen, 2025). Additionally, the study did not take nationalities into account. Although the predominant nationalities were Portuguese (32.1%), American (18.5%) and British (11.3%), there was a vast range of nationalities and as such, it is difficult to generalise the findings.

Cultural differences are important to take into consideration and could provide a basis for future research.

The experimental design, whilst successful, also provided some limitations. A single vignette exposure is not sufficient to determine full fan conversion, hence the focus on initial and low-barrier engagement intentions. When investigating full fan conversion, a longitudinal study, of 6 months for instance, might be more apt and provide additional insights on what drives fan conversion and engagement intent for non-fans. In a longitudinal study, tracking Gen Z non-fans' progression through the PCM stages could clarify the dynamics of personal relevance as a mechanism.

If carrying out a further cross-sectional study, an enhancement would be to include more stimuli per attribute, to ensure a well-rounded representation of each dimension. For instance, this study's athletic performance vignette did not capture the competitive sub-dimension, although it is, difficult to contextualise if an individual is unfamiliar with F1 and lacks technical knowledge. Future research would also benefit from complementing the quantitative research with a qualitative focus group which would provide more detailed insights than a survey is able to.

This research utilised a male athlete as the focal point for initial engagement, but differences of perception between female and male athletes exist (Xu, 2025), which are not necessarily controlled by content strategy, but by social and gender dynamics (Murtas et al, 2025). Although not yet directly relevant to Formula 1, as all drivers are male, the FIA has developed women-only racing series to boost female drivers in motorsports (i.e. F1 Academy), making it a valuable extension to the research, to focus on a female athlete.

It should be noted that research on non-fans is still limited, and the field would benefit from further studies. In an age where social media serves as a doorway into new interests and sports, non-fans are a beneficial demographic to study as sports and leagues aim to grow. Investigating both the social influence and social media intensity of non-fans in more depth would be an interesting research avenue to pursue, especially as these are common gateways for Formula 1 (Domenicali and Allen, 2025).

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7. Appendix

7.1. Survey

7.1.1. Survey Questions



Start of Block: Intro

Thank you for your interest in this survey. This research study exploring how Formula 1 drivers are perceived by young adults, is part of a master thesis at Católica Lisbon SBE. The purpose of this survey is to understand what shapes people's impressions of athletes, including their performance, appearance, and lifestyle, and how these impressions might relate to their attitudes toward Formula 1. Please answer all questions honestly and based on your genuine impressions.. Your input will provide valuable insights into how athletes connect with new generations of fans. Any personal data is kept completely confidential and used solely for research purposes. If you have any questions about the study, you may contact the researcher at the email address provided at the end of the survey. Participation is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any point. Thank you for your time and participation.

End of Block: Intro

Start of Block: Screening

Q1 How old are you?

- <18 (1)
- 18-25 (2)
- 26-30 (3)
- >30 (4)

Q2 In the last 12 months, how many **full** Formula 1 Grand Prix have you watched live or on replay?

- Zero (1)
- 1-2 (3)
- 3 or more (2)

End of Block: Screening

Start of Block: Formula 1 Fan?

Q2.1 Would you consider yourself a Formula 1 fan?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

End of Block: Formula 1 Fan?

Start of Block: Baseline Attitudes

Q3 To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements?

Q4 I am interested in learning about sports.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly agree (7)

Q5 I am interested in learning about athletes.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly agree (7)

Q6 I enjoy following athletes on social media.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly agree (7)

Q7 I enjoy watching sports content on social media (videos, highlights, clips).

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly agree (7)

Q8 To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements? (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

	Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Agree		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My friends' interests often influence mine. ()							
I'm more likely to engage with something if people close to me are also engaged with it. ()							
I'm more likely to watch a sport if my friends also watch it. ()							
My friends' sports interests influence what sports I follow. ()							

Q9 How often do you use social media?

- Daily (1)
- 4-6 times a week (2)
- 2-3 times a week (3)
- Once a week (4)
- Less than once a week (5)

Q10 Which social media platforms do you use regularly? (select all that apply)

- Instagram (1)
- TikTok (2)
- Twitter/X (3)
- Facebook (4)
- YouTube (5)
- Snapchat (6)
- LinkedIn (7)

Q11 What do you use social media primarily for (select all that apply)?

- For photo/video posting purposes (1)
- To communicate with friends (2)
- For instant status sharing (i.e. stories, etc.) (3)
- For entertainment purposes (4)
- To follow news on areas of interest (i.e. fashion, film, sports, etc.) (5)
- To express opinions about areas of interest (6)
- To follow well-known/public figures (7)

Q12 How familiar are you with Formula 1?

- Not familiar at all (1)
- Slightly familiar (2)
- Moderately familiar (3)
- Very familiar (4)
- Extremely familiar (5)

End of Block: Baseline Attitudes

Start of Block: Vignette intro

Q13 You will now see a social media post from Lando Norris, a 26-year-old Formula 1 driver, who drives for the team McLaren Racing. He has been in Formula 1 since 2019, always with McLaren Racing. He is currently leading the World Drivers' Championship in the 2025 Formula 1 season. Please watch it carefully, consider any captions and comments that may be included.

End of Block: Vignette intro

Start of Block: Vignette 1 - Athleticism

Q14.1 Please watch this video carefully and then proceed to the next question.

End of Block: Vignette 1 - Athleticism

Start of Block: Vignette 2 - Appearance

Q15.1 Please watch this video carefully and then proceed to the next question.

End of Block: Vignette 2 - Appearance

Start of Block: Vignette 3 - Lifestyle

Q16.1 Please watch this video carefully and then proceed to the next question.

Page Break

End of Block: Vignette 3 - Lifestyle

Start of Block: Post Vignette Questions

Q17 To what extent did...

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely
	1	2	3	4	5
This post capture your attention? ()					
You find this post engaging? ()					

Q18 Were you familiar with this driver before?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q19 Attention Check (please select the option "Vettel")

- Senna (1)
- Vettel (2)
- Prost (3)

End of Block: Post Vignette Questions

Start of Block: athletic post vignette

Q20 Considering the post you just saw, to what extent do you agree with the statements below?

Q20.1 This driver seems highly skilled at Formula 1.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly agree (7)

Q20.2 This driver seems to demonstrate a strong competitive ability.

- Strongly disagree (1)
 - Disagree (2)
 - Somewhat disagree (3)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - Somewhat agree (5)
 - Agree (6)
 - Strongly agree (7)
-

Q20.3 Watching this driver compete would be impressive.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly agree (7)

Q20.4 This driver doesn't seem particularly talented.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly agree (7)

End of Block: athletic post vignette

Start of Block: appearance post vignette

Q21 Considering the post you just saw, to what extent do you agree with the statements below?

Q21.1 This driver presents themselves well.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly agree (7)

Q21.2 This driver's fashion/appearance is appealing.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly agree (7)

Q21.3 This driver has a distinctive personal style.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly agree (7)

Q21.4 This driver doesn't stand out visually.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly agree (7)

End of Block: appearance post vignette

Start of Block: lifestyle post vignette

Q22 Considering the post you just saw, to what extent do you agree with the statements below?

Q22.1 This driver appears engaged and connected with people.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly agree (7)

Q22.2 This driver seems to care about his fans and supporters.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly agree (7)

Q22.3 This driver comes across as genuine and authentic.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly agree (7)

Q22.4 This driver's lifestyle seems uninteresting to me.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly agree (7)

End of Block: lifestyle post vignette

Start of Block: relevance and engagement

Q23 This athlete makes me curious about Formula 1.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly agree (7)

Q24 This athlete makes Formula 1 seem interesting to me.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly agree (7)

Q25 I would consider learning more about Formula 1.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly agree (7)

Q26 Formula 1 does not feel more relevant to me after learning about this athlete.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly agree (7)

Q27 Considering the post you saw, how likely would you be to: (1=extremely unlikely; 7=extremely likely)

	Unlikely		Neither likely or unlikely			Likely	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Follow this athlete on social media ()							
Check the driver's team on social media ()							
Watch a full F1 race featuring this athlete ()							
Discuss about this athlete with friends or online ()							

End of Block: relevance and engagement

Start of Block: Demographics

Q28 What is your gender?

- Female (1)
- Male (2)
- Non-binary / third gender (3)
- Prefer not to say (4)

Q29 Which country do you come from?
Countries (1)

▼ Afghanistan (1) ... Zimbabwe (223)

Q30 What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

- Elementary School (1)
- High School (2)
- Bachelor's Degree (3)
- Master's Degree (4)
- Doctoral Degree (5)
- Prefer not to say (6)

Q31 What best describes your current position?

- Student (1)
- Working student (2)
- Employed (3)
- Self-employed (4)
- Unemployed (5)
- Prefer not to say (6)

7.1.2. Survey Vignettes

Athletic Appearance Vignette



Link: <https://youtube.com/shorts/f9OgHitdExo>

Attractive Appearance Vignette



Link: <https://youtube.com/shorts/1yfOCM1goXY>

Marketable Lifestyle Vignette



Link: <https://youtube.com/shorts/kWLVtGHAaRk>

7.2. Data Analysis Results

7.2.1. Descriptives

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Athletic Performance Composite	130	2.67	7.00	5.6769	.94913
Attractive Appearance Composite	131	2.33	7.00	5.4758	1.01023
Marketable Lifestyle Composite	129	2.33	7.00	5.2713	1.14698
Personal Relevance Composite	390	1.00	7.00	4.9470	1.42730
Sports Interest Composite	390	1.00	7.00	5.0026	1.34730
Social Influence Composite	389	1.00	7.00	4.7333	1.13988
Engagement Intentions Composite	390	1.00	7.00	4.4295	1.59636
F1 Familiarity	390	1	5	2.57	1.151
Valid N (listwise)	0				

7.2.2. H1 Regressions

Key:

ap_comp = athletic performance composite

aa_comp = attractive appearance composite

ml_comp = marketable lifestyle composite

rel_comp = personal relevance composite

Athletic Performance

Model Summary (Athletic Performance) ^c										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.589 ^a	.347	.332	1.13526	.347	22.351	3	126	<.001	
2	.684 ^b	.468	.451	1.02903	.121	28.357	1	125	<.001	

a. Predictors: (Constant), Were you familiar with this driver before?, SportsInterest_comp, How familiar are you with Formula 1?
b. Predictors: (Constant), Were you familiar with this driver before?, SportsInterest_comp, How familiar are you with Formula 1, ap_comp
c. Dependent Variable: rel_comp

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	86.420	3	28.807	22.351	<.001 ^b
	Residual	162.391	126	1.289		
	Total	248.811	129			
2	Regression	116.447	4	29.112	27.492	<.001 ^c
	Residual	132.364	125	1.059		
	Total	248.811	129			

a. Dependent Variable: rel_comp
b. Predictors: (Constant), Were you familiar with this driver before?, SportsInterest_comp, How familiar are you with Formula 1?
c. Predictors: (Constant), Were you familiar with this driver before?, SportsInterest_comp, How familiar are you with Formula 1, ap_comp

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.755	.638		1.183	.239
	SportsInterest_comp	.395	.085	.393	4.655	<.001
	How familiar are you with Formula 1?	.459	.102	.386	4.516	<.001
	Were you familiar with this driver before?	.808	.227	.292	3.562	<.001
2	(Constant)	-1.176	.683		-1.722	.088
	SportsInterest_comp	.249	.082	.248	3.046	.003
	How familiar are you with Formula 1?	.389	.093	.327	4.177	<.001
	Were you familiar with this driver before?	.578	.210	.209	2.751	.007
	ap_comp	.560	.105	.383	5.325	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: rel_comp

Attractive Appearance

Model Summary (Attractive Appearance) ^c										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.384 ^a	.148	.127	1.40657	.148	7.326	3	127	<.001	
2	.657 ^b	.431	.413	1.15348	.284	62.844	1	126	<.001	

a. Predictors: (Constant), Were you familiar with this driver before?, SportsInterest_comp, How familiar are you with Formula 1?
b. Predictors: (Constant), Were you familiar with this driver before?, SportsInterest_comp, How familiar are you with Formula 1, aa_comp
c. Dependent Variable: rel_comp

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	43.479	3	14.493	7.326	<.001 ^b
	Residual	251.260	127	1.978		
	Total	294.740	130			
2	Regression	127.094	4	31.773	23.880	<.001 ^c
	Residual	167.646	126	1.331		
	Total	294.740	130			

a. Dependent Variable: rel_comp
b. Predictors: (Constant), Were you familiar with this driver before?, SportsInterest_comp, How familiar are you with Formula 1?
c. Predictors: (Constant), Were you familiar with this driver before?, SportsInterest_comp, How familiar are you with Formula 1, aa_comp

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.772	.701		2.529	.013
	SportsInterest_comp	.199	.097	.185	2.052	.042
	How familiar are you with Formula 1?	.349	.120	.287	2.914	.004
	Were you familiar with this driver before?	.786	.273	.262	2.883	.005
2	(Constant)	-2.166	.759		-2.851	.005
	SportsInterest_comp	.066	.081	.062	.817	.416
	How familiar are you with Formula 1?	.295	.099	.242	2.991	.003
	Were you familiar with this driver before?	.906	.224	.302	4.045	<.001
	aa_comp	.830	.105	.557	7.927	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: rel_comp

Marketable Lifestyle

Model Summary (Marketable Lifestyle) ^c										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics				
						F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.478 ^a	.229	.210	1.22627	.229	12.373	3	125	<.001	
2	.695 ^b	.482	.466	1.00870	.254	60.738	1	124	<.001	

a. Predictors: (Constant), Were you familiar with this driver before?, SportsInterest_comp, How familiar are you with Formula 1?
b. Predictors: (Constant), Were you familiar with this driver before?, SportsInterest_comp, How familiar are you with Formula 1?, ml_comp
c. Dependent Variable: rel_comp

ANOVA ^a						Coefficients ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
								B	Std. Error			
1	Regression	55.817	3	18.606	12.373	<.001 ^b	(Constant)	2.164	.670		3.229	.002
	Residual	187.967	125	1.504			SportsInterest_comp	.336	.108	.307	3.099	.002
	Total	243.785	128				How familiar are you with Formula 1?	.325	.134	.247	2.416	.017
2	Regression	117.617	4	29.404	28.899	<.001 ^c	Were you familiar with this driver before?	.140	.238	.050	.586	.559
	Residual	126.168	124	1.017			(Constant)	.117	.611		.192	.848
	Total	243.785	128				SportsInterest_comp	.177	.091	.161	1.932	.056
							How familiar are you with Formula 1?	.159	.113	.121	1.410	.161
							Were you familiar with this driver before?	-.011	.197	-.004	-.054	.957
							ml_comp	.665	.085	.552	7.793	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: rel_comp
b. Predictors: (Constant), Were you familiar with this driver before?, SportsInterest_comp, How familiar are you with Formula 1?
c. Predictors: (Constant), Were you familiar with this driver before?, SportsInterest_comp, How familiar are you with Formula 1?, ml_comp
a. Dependent Variable: rel_comp

7.2.3. H3 Regressions (pt2)

Athletic Performance

Model Summary ^c										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics				
						F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.500 ^a	.250	.232	1.39962	.250	13.986	3	126	<.001	
2	.781 ^b	.610	.594	1.01732	.360	57.246	2	124	<.001	

a. Predictors: (Constant), Were you familiar with this driver before?, SportsInterest_comp, How familiar are you with Formula 1?
b. Predictors: (Constant), Were you familiar with this driver before?, SportsInterest_comp, How familiar are you with Formula 1?, ap_comp, rel_comp
c. Dependent Variable: intention_comp

ANOVA ^a						Coefficients ^a								
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
								B	Std. Error				Beta	Tolerance
1	Regression	82.191	3	27.397	13.986	<.001 ^b	(Constant)	.196	.787		.249	.804		
	Residual	246.826	126	1.959			SportsInterest_comp	.211	.105	.183	2.018	.046	.726	1.378
	Total	329.017	129				How familiar are you with Formula 1?	.601	.125	.439	4.794	<.001	.710	1.409
2	Regression	200.684	5	40.137	38.781	<.001 ^c	Were you familiar with this driver before?	1.189	.280	.373	4.247	<.001	.773	1.294
	Residual	128.334	124	1.035			(Constant)	-1.253	.683		-1.835	.069		
	Total	329.017	129				SportsInterest_comp	-.152	.084	-.132	-1.821	.071	.599	1.669
							How familiar are you with Formula 1?	.224	.098	.164	2.278	.024	.610	1.639
							Were you familiar with this driver before?	.476	.214	.149	2.224	.028	.698	1.433
							ap_comp	.256	.115	.152	2.221	.028	.670	1.492
							rel_comp	.751	.088	.653	8.495	<.001	.532	1.880

a. Dependent Variable: intention_comp
b. Predictors: (Constant), Were you familiar with this driver before?, SportsInterest_comp, How familiar are you with Formula 1?
c. Predictors: (Constant), Were you familiar with this driver before?, SportsInterest_comp, How familiar are you with Formula 1?, ap_comp, rel_comp
a. Dependent Variable: intention_comp

Attractive Appearance

Model Summary ^c										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics				
						F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.338 ^a	.114	.093	1.50000	.114	5.469	3	127	.001	
2	.845 ^b	.715	.703	.85829	.600	131.450	2	125	<.001	

a. Predictors: (Constant), Were you familiar with this driver before?, SportsInterest_comp, How familiar are you with Formula 1?
b. Predictors: (Constant), Were you familiar with this driver before?, SportsInterest_comp, How familiar are you with Formula 1?, aa_comp, rel_comp
c. Dependent Variable: intention_comp

ANOVA ^a						Coefficients ^a								
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
													Tolerance	VIF
1	Regression	36.917	3	12.306	5.469	.001 ^b	(Constant)	1.712	.747		2.292	.024		
	Residual	285.750	127	2.250			SportsInterest_comp	.123	.103	.109	1.187	.238	.827	1.209
	Total	322.668	130				How familiar are you with Formula 1?	-.390	.128	-.306	3.055	.003	.693	1.442
2	Regression	230.585	5	46.117	62.603	<.001 ^c	Were you familiar with this driver before?	.666	.291	.212	2.292	.024	.814	1.229
	Residual	92.083	125	.737			(Constant)	-.245	.583		-.420	.675		
	Total	322.668	130				SportsInterest_comp	-.060	.061	-.053	-.984	.327	.788	1.270
							How familiar are you with Formula 1?	.092	.076	.072	1.212	.228	.644	1.552
							Were you familiar with this driver before?	.024	.177	.008	.135	.893	.717	1.395
							rel_comp	.836	.066	.799	12.609	<.001	.569	1.758
							aa_comp	.100	.095	.064	1.052	.295	.610	1.640

a. Dependent Variable: intention_comp

Marketable Lifestyle

Model Summary ^c										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics				
						F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.493 ^a	.243	.225	1.42674	.243	13.386	3	125	<.001	
2	.828 ^b	.685	.673	.92741	.442	86.419	2	123	<.001	

a. Predictors: (Constant), Were you familiar with this driver before?, SportsInterest_comp, How familiar are you with Formula 1?
b. Predictors: (Constant), Were you familiar with this driver before?, SportsInterest_comp, How familiar are you with Formula 1?, ml_comp, rel_comp
c. Dependent Variable: intention_comp

ANOVA ^a						Coefficients ^a								
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
													Tolerance	VIF
1	Regression	81.743	3	27.248	13.386	<.001 ^b	(Constant)	.014	.780		.018	.985		
	Residual	254.447	125	2.036			SportsInterest_comp	.247	.126	.192	1.962	.052	.629	1.589
	Total	336.190	128				How familiar are you with Formula 1?	.585	.156	.378	3.740	<.001	.592	1.690
2	Regression	230.399	5	46.080	53.576	<.001 ^c	Were you familiar with this driver before?	1.141	.277	.350	4.111	<.001	.834	1.198
	Residual	105.791	123	.860			(Constant)	-1.974	.561		-3.516	<.001		
	Total	336.190	128				SportsInterest_comp	-.054	.085	-.042	-.628	.531	.581	1.722
							How familiar are you with Formula 1?	.293	.104	.190	2.811	.006	.562	1.780
							Were you familiar with this driver before?	1.011	.181	.311	5.581	<.001	.826	1.210
							rel_comp	.873	.083	.743	10.573	<.001	.518	1.932
							ml_comp	.032	.096	.023	.338	.736	.558	1.793

a. Dependent Variable: intention_comp

7.2.3. H4 Regression

Model Summary ^d										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics				
						F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.443 ^a	.196	.190	1.43701	.196	31.353	3	385	<.001	
2	.811 ^b	.658	.654	.93944	.462	258.919	2	383	<.001	
3	.812 ^c	.659	.654	.93977	.001	.727	1	382	.394	

a. Predictors: (Constant), How familiar are you with Formula 17, Were you familiar with this driver before?, SportsInterest_comp
 b. Predictors: (Constant), How familiar are you with Formula 17, Were you familiar with this driver before?, SportsInterest_comp, influ_centred, rel_centred
 c. Predictors: (Constant), How familiar are you with Formula 17, Were you familiar with this driver before?, SportsInterest_comp, influ_centred, rel_centred, influ_x_rel
 d. Dependent Variable: intention_comp

ANOVA ^a						Coefficients ^a												
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Zero-order	Correlations Partial	Part	Collinearity Statistics Tolerance	VIF	
1	Regression	194.234	3	64.745	31.353	<.001 ^b	1	(Constant)	.732	.441		1.661	.097					
	Residual	795.028	385	2.065			1	Were you familiar with this driver before?	.975	.161	.305	6.037	<.001	.101	.294	.276	.817	1.224
	Total	989.262	388				1	SportsInterest_comp	.178	.063	.150	2.838	.005	.249	.143	.130	.746	1.341
2	Regression	651.248	5	130.250	147.585	<.001 ^c	2	How familiar are you with Formula 17?	.536	.077	.385	6.938	<.001	.333	.333	.317	.678	1.475
	Residual	338.014	383	.883			2	(Constant)	3.601	.315		11.448	<.001					
	Total	989.262	388				2	Were you familiar with this driver before?	.459	.109	.144	4.230	<.001	.101	.211	.126	.772	1.296
3	Regression	651.890	6	108.648	123.021	<.001 ^d	3	SportsInterest_comp	-.080	.042	-.068	-1.888	.060	.249	-.096	-.056	.693	1.444
	Residual	337.372	382	.883			3	How familiar are you with Formula 17?	.216	.053	.155	4.089	<.001	.333	.205	.122	.623	1.605
	Total	989.262	388				3	rel_centred	.809	.040	.723	20.240	<.001	.788	.719	.605	.700	1.429
								influ_centred	.152	.045	.108	3.353	<.001	.371	.169	.100	.856	1.168
								(Constant)	3.619	.315		11.476	<.001					
								Were you familiar with this driver before?	.454	.109	.142	4.176	<.001	.101	.209	.125	.769	1.300
								SportsInterest_comp	-.080	.042	-.068	-1.886	.060	.249	-.096	-.056	.693	1.444
								How familiar are you with Formula 17?	.216	.053	.155	4.087	<.001	.333	.205	.122	.623	1.605
								rel_centred	.804	.040	.718	19.904	<.001	.788	.714	.595	.686	1.458
								influ_centred	.144	.046	.103	3.122	.002	.371	.158	.093	.824	1.214
								influ_x_rel	-.021	.025	-.027	-.853	.394	-.235	-.044	-.025	.903	1.108

a. Dependent Variable: intention_comp

7.2.4. H5 Regressions

Athletic Performance

Model Summary ^d										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics				
						F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.500 ^a	.250	.232	1.39962	.250	13.986	3	126	<.001	
2	.630 ^b	.397	.373	1.26442	.148	15.194	2	124	<.001	
3	.636 ^c	.405	.376	1.26205	.007	1.465	1	123	.228	

a. Predictors: (Constant), How familiar are you with Formula 17, Were you familiar with this driver before?, SportsInterest_comp
 b. Predictors: (Constant), How familiar are you with Formula 17, Were you familiar with this driver before?, SportsInterest_comp, SM_intensity_centred, ap_centred
 c. Predictors: (Constant), How familiar are you with Formula 17, Were you familiar with this driver before?, SportsInterest_comp, SM_intensity_centred, ap_centred, ap_x_sm
 d. Dependent Variable: intention_comp

ANOVA ^a						Coefficients ^a												
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Zero-order	Correlations Partial	Part	Collinearity Statistics Tolerance	VIF	
1	Regression	82.191	3	27.397	13.986	<.001 ^b	1	(Constant)	.196	.787		.249	.804					
	Residual	246.826	126	1.959			1	Were you familiar with this driver before?	1.189	.280	.373	4.247	<.001	.115	.354	.328	.773	1.294
	Total	329.017	129				1	SportsInterest_comp	.211	.105	.183	2.018	.046	.244	.177	.156	.726	1.378
2	Regression	130.773	5	26.155	16.359	<.001 ^c	2	How familiar are you with Formula 17?	.601	.125	.439	4.794	<.001	.369	.393	.370	.710	1.409
	Residual	198.244	124	1.599			2	(Constant)	1.804	.769		2.345	.021					
	Total	329.017	129				2	Were you familiar with this driver before?	.902	.258	.283	3.492	<.001	.115	.299	.243	.740	1.352
3	Regression	133.106	6	22.184	13.928	<.001 ^d	3	SportsInterest_comp	.048	.101	.042	.480	.632	.244	.043	.033	.639	1.564
	Residual	195.911	123	1.593			3	How familiar are you with Formula 17?	.454	.120	.332	3.786	<.001	.369	.322	.264	.633	1.580
	Total	329.017	129				3	ap_centred	.737	.134	.438	5.504	<.001	.506	.443	.384	.767	1.304
								SM_intensity_centred	-.248	.143	-.130	-1.727	.087	-.081	-.153	-.120	.857	1.166
								(Constant)	1.670	.776		2.151	.033					
								Were you familiar with this driver before?	.951	.261	.298	3.644	<.001	.115	.312	.254	.722	1.385
								SportsInterest_comp	.055	.101	.048	.550	.583	.244	.050	.038	.637	1.569
								How familiar are you with Formula 17?	.454	.120	.332	3.799	<.001	.369	.324	.264	.633	1.580
								ap_centred	.768	.136	.456	5.643	<.001	.506	.453	.393	.741	1.350
								SM_intensity_centred	-.233	.144	-.122	-1.622	.107	-.081	-.145	-.113	.851	1.175
								ap_x_sm	.147	.122	.089	1.210	.228	-.055	.108	.084	.904	1.107

a. Dependent Variable: intention_comp

Attractive Appearance

Model Summary ^d										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics				
						F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.338 ^a	.114	.093	1.50000	.114	5.469	3	127	.001	
2	.600 ^b	.360	.335	1.28483	.246	24.050	2	125	<.001	
3	.608 ^c	.370	.339	1.28070	.009	1.808	1	124	.181	

a. Predictors: (Constant), How familiar are you with Formula 17, SportsInterest_comp, Were you familiar with this driver before?
 b. Predictors: (Constant), How familiar are you with Formula 17, SportsInterest_comp, Were you familiar with this driver before?, aa_centred, SM_intensity_centred
 c. Predictors: (Constant), How familiar are you with Formula 17, SportsInterest_comp, Were you familiar with this driver before?, aa_centred, SM_intensity_centred, aa_x_sm
 d. Dependent Variable: intention_comp

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	36.917	3	12.306	5.469	.001 ^b
	Residual	285.750	127	2.250		
	Total	322.668	130			
2	Regression	116.319	5	23.264	14.093	<.001 ^c
	Residual	206.349	125	1.651		
	Total	322.668	130			
3	Regression	119.284	6	19.881	12.121	<.001 ^d
	Residual	203.384	124	1.640		
	Total	322.668	130			

Coefficients ^a												
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t			Sig.	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance
1	(Constant)	1.712	.747		2.292	.024						
	Were you familiar with this driver before?	.666	.291	.212	2.292	.024	.061	.199	.191	.814	1.229	
	SportsInterest_comp	.123	.103	.109	1.187	.238	.200	.105	.099	.827	1.209	
	How familiar are you with Formula 17	.390	.128	.306	3.055	.003	.260	.262	.255	.693	1.442	
2	(Constant)	2.248	.647		3.475	<.001						
	Were you familiar with this driver before?	.797	.250	.254	3.189	.002	.061	.274	.228	.808	1.237	
	SportsInterest_comp	.021	.093	.019	.228	.820	.200	.020	.016	.758	1.320	
	How familiar are you with Formula 17	.299	.114	.235	2.632	.010	.260	.229	.188	.643	1.555	
3	(Constant)	2.211	.645		3.427	<.001						
	Were you familiar with this driver before?	.804	.249	.256	3.228	.002	.061	.278	.230	.808	1.238	
	SportsInterest_comp	.025	.092	.023	.275	.784	.200	.025	.020	.757	1.321	
	How familiar are you with Formula 17	.299	.113	.235	2.640	.009	.260	.231	.188	.643	1.555	
3	aa_centred	.806	.117	.513	6.853	<.001	.526	.523	.490	.913	1.095	
	SM_intensity_centred	-.180	.137	-.099	-1.316	.191	-.102	-.117	-.094	.899	1.112	
	aa_x_sm	.176	.131	.097	1.344	.181	.019	.120	.096	.975	1.025	
	SM_intensity_centred	-.200	.137	-.110	-1.457	.148	-.102	-.130	-.104	.889	1.125	

a. Dependent Variable: intention_comp

Marketable Lifestyle

Model Summary ^d										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics				
						F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.493 ^a	.243	.225	1.42674	.243	13.386	3	125	<.001	
2	.637 ^b	.406	.381	1.27470	.162	16.798	2	123	<.001	
3	.648 ^c	.420	.392	1.26375	.015	3.141	1	122	.079	

a. Predictors: (Constant), How familiar are you with Formula 17, Were you familiar with this driver before?, SportsInterest_comp
 b. Predictors: (Constant), How familiar are you with Formula 17, Were you familiar with this driver before?, SportsInterest_comp, SM_intensity_centred, ml_centred
 c. Predictors: (Constant), How familiar are you with Formula 17, Were you familiar with this driver before?, SportsInterest_comp, SM_intensity_centred, ml_centred, life_x_sm
 d. Dependent Variable: intention_comp

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	81.743	3	27.248	13.386	<.001 ^b
	Residual	254.447	125	2.036		
	Total	336.190	128			
2	Regression	136.333	5	27.267	16.781	<.001 ^c
	Residual	199.857	123	1.625		
	Total	336.190	128			
3	Regression	141.350	6	23.558	14.751	<.001 ^d
	Residual	194.840	122	1.597		
	Total	336.190	128			

Coefficients ^a												
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t			Sig.	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance
1	(Constant)	.014	.780		.018	.985						
	Were you familiar with this driver before?	1.141	.277	.350	4.111	<.001	.140	.345	.320	.834	1.198	
	SportsInterest_comp	.247	.126	.192	1.962	.052	.309	.173	.153	.629	1.589	
	How familiar are you with Formula 17	.585	.156	.378	3.740	<.001	.356	.317	.291	.592	1.690	
2	(Constant)	1.322	.736		1.796	.075						
	Were you familiar with this driver before?	1.027	.250	.315	4.107	<.001	.140	.347	.286	.820	1.219	
	SportsInterest_comp	.114	.116	.089	.985	.326	.309	.088	.068	.591	1.691	
	How familiar are you with Formula 17	.406	.144	.262	2.816	.006	.356	.246	.196	.556	1.798	
3	(Constant)	.619	.108	.438	5.736	<.001	.536	.459	.399	.828	1.207	
	ml_centred	-.153	.135	-.081	-1.133	.259	-.067	-.102	-.079	.956	1.046	
	(Constant)	1.171	.735		1.593	.114						
	Were you familiar with this driver before?	1.001	.248	.307	4.032	<.001	.140	.343	.278	.817	1.223	
3	SportsInterest_comp	.138	.116	.107	1.191	.236	.309	.107	.082	.584	1.713	
	How familiar are you with Formula 17	.430	.144	.278	2.995	.003	.356	.262	.206	.551	1.814	
	ml_centred	.676	.112	.478	6.051	<.001	.536	.480	.417	.760	1.316	
	SM_intensity_centred	-.161	.134	-.085	-1.199	.233	-.067	-.108	-.083	.955	1.047	
3	life_x_sm	.220	.124	.137	1.772	.079	-.125	.158	.122	.794	1.259	

a. Dependent Variable: intention_comp