



UNIVERSIDADE
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FEMALE FAN ENGAGEMENT AND FEMALE AUDIENCE
ATTRACTION IN FORMULA 1

Dissertation to Universidade Católica Portuguesa to
obtain a Master's Degree in Communication Studies:
Communication, Marketing and Advertising

By

Marina Correia Lopes

Faculty of Human Sciences

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Resumo

O mundo desportivo tem vindo a sofrer diversas alterações a nível da representação feminina, mas também os grupos e comunidades de fãs têm vindo a sofrer fortes mudanças. O mundo desportivo é composto não apenas por atletas mas também pelos seus fãs, e estes também moldam as relações que são estabelecidas com as entidades que formam o próprio desporto.

A Fórmula 1 tem vindo a sofrer fortes alterações de forma a adaptar-se aos tempos de hoje em que o marketing e as redes sociais possuem grande influência no seu público. Este público tem vindo a sofrer um aumento exponencial de fãs femininas do desporto que cada vez mais se expressam nas redes sociais e através de comunidade de fãs online.

O presente estudo procurou explorar a relação existente entre o conteúdo criado online por fãs femininas de Fórmula 1 e a influência que este tem na atração de mais público feminino para o desporto. Para tal primeiro entrevistas foram realizadas para perceber quais as características de uma fã feminina de Fórmula 1, visto não existirem estudos neste contexto sobre tal, e perceber que fatores atraíram estas fãs ao desportivo. De seguida foi observado através de netnografia o conteúdo de diversas comunidades de fãs femininas de Fórmula 1 de forma a perceber o tipo de conteúdo que gera mais *engagement* e que mais fortemente pode atrair mais público feminino. Finalmente, os resultados anteriores foram testados juntos da comunidade mundial de fãs de Fórmula 1 de forma a estabelecer conclusões mais gerais.

Os resultados finais revelaram que existe uma estreita relação de influência entre o *engagement* e conteúdo criado online e a atração de mais público feminino à Fórmula 1, principalmente devido a questões relacionadas com o conforto e confiança ganho por estas fãs ao saberem que existe um espaço para si, num mundo desportivo que por largos anos foi considerado um mundo de homens.

Palavras-chave: fãs femininas de desporto, mulheres, Fórmula 1, fan engagement, marketing online, conteúdo criado online, redes sociais, comunidades de fãs, feminismo

Abstract

The sporting world has seen significant advancements in female representation, not only among athletes but also within fan groups and communities. These fan communities play a crucial role in shaping the relationships between sports entities and their audiences. Formula 1, in particular, has been undergoing substantial transformations to adapt to contemporary trends, where marketing strategies and social media exert considerable influence over its fanbase. This shift has been accompanied by a notable increase in female sports fans, who are increasingly vocal on social media platforms and active within online fan communities.

The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between the content generated online by female Formula 1 fans and its influence on attracting a broader female audience to the sport. The research was structured in several phases. Initially, interviews were conducted to identify the characteristics of female Formula 1 fans—a topic that has not been extensively explored in existing literature—and to understand the factors that drew these fans to the sport. Following this, a netnographic analysis was conducted to observe content within various female Formula 1 fan communities, with the goal of identifying the types of content that generate higher engagement and potentially attract more female viewers. Finally, the insights gained from these analyses were tested against a global community of Formula 1 fans to derive more generalized conclusions.

The study's findings revealed a strong relationship between the engagement generated by online content and the attraction of additional female audiences to Formula 1. This relationship is particularly influenced by the sense of comfort and confidence these fans experience when they recognize that there is a space for them within a sport historically perceived as male-dominated. The presence of such spaces, where female fans can express themselves and connect with like-minded individuals, plays a critical role in breaking down longstanding gender barriers and fostering a more inclusive fanbase in Formula 1.

Keywords: female sports fans, women, Formula 1, fan engagement, online marketing, content created online, social media, fan communities, feminism.

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Introduction

This dissertation addresses the concept of fan engagement, namely the public of female Formula 1 fans. The relevance of this study lies in the fact that there is no vast literature on women as sports fans because, as Pope (2017) tells us, most studies have focused only on male fans and, sometimes, create a predominantly male image of the sporting world, while, on the other hand, they categorize female fans as being inauthentic and not a real representation of what it means to be a true sports fan.

In the case of motorsports, they tend to be represented more permanently as masculine sports (Scraton & Flintoff, 2013; Plaza et al., 2017), which can induce feelings of marginalization in female fans and make them feel discredited. Therefore, if the objective is to attract more women to the Formula 1 audience, it is necessary to understand how they see themselves, and how they interact with other people, within a sports fandom, and it is important to pay attention to their routines and experiences as fans of the sport (Toffoletti, 2017). Fandom is the principal meaning of involvement with a sport and has grown more exponentially given the interconnections between the sports, mass media and now online and social media world enabling fans to find others just like them, in a much faster way where they can communicate across time and space (Antunovic & Hardin, 2015). It is noteworthy to acknowledge the absence of a definitive and universally agreed-upon definition of sports fandom within scholarly discourse. Within academic literature, sports fandom is often characterised as a multifaceted construct, encompassing diverse dimensions. These dimensions extend beyond mere observation or tracking of sporting events, encapsulating facets such as individual identity formation, emotional attachment, social interaction, and observable behavioural patterns. The conceptualisation of sports fandom thus reflects a complex interplay of cognitive, affective, and behavioural components, underscoring its intricate nature. This multifaceted conceptualisation underscores the need for a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of sports fandom within scholarly inquiry (Wann & James, 2019).

In Formula 1, the engagement of the female and younger audience has been something that Formula 1 is looking for (Motorsport Network et al., 2021) and, to this end, the entire digital management of Formula 1 has been renewed, which coincides with the fact that Formula 1 has never had as much interest and engagement as it does today, as well as never had such a high female audience, having doubled in 4 years (Motorsport Network et al., 2021).

Over the years, several sports categories have been considered predominantly male, and this categorization is applied to sportsmen and fans. This creates barriers and keeps many women away from becoming athletes, or from showing their support for a team or sport. But as we've seen in the data above, that's not the case. An annual report by the organization "*More Than Equal*" in 2023, demonstrates that the female Formula 1 fan base is about 10 years younger than the male fan base. About 40% of the women have become motorsports fans in the last 5 years, and they are also more dedicated to social media, with about 70% more *engagement* than the male fan base.

Therefore, it is important to better understand female Formula 1 fans, especially their activity on social media, with high levels of popularity, to understand how engagement is built in terms of content, and how it can attract even more fans. This is also worthwhile for Formula 1 and the teams in the sport to construct more deep relationships with their fans (Næss & Tickell, 2019). Thus, this study contributes to improving forms of communication, management and marketing that meet the objective of increasing this audience, thus helping Formula 1 as a sport, and the various teams to improve their communication with fans (Christodoulides et al., 2012).

The phenomenon of fan engagement has always been widely studied in various sports environments, but it still lacks a consensual definition. The conceptualization of fan engagement that should be used always depends on the context in which we want to study the concept. A possible conceptualization was given by Patterson, Yu and Ruyter (2006) who stated that fan engagement is composed of cognitive aspects, an affective dimension, a behavioural dimension, and interactions. When exploring the different dimensions, they notice that the cognitive involves interest in an organization's activities; the behavioural encompasses active participation in such activities; and the emotional reflects sentiments towards the organization's endeavours. This diversity in definitions underscores the evident absence of a unified consensus (Brodie et al., 2011). Definitions of engagement also differ based on the perspective of the audience. From a consumer standpoint, engagement pertains to an organization's sincere effort to comprehend its requirements, the nature of interactions between the organization and its clientele, the dynamics of the product-customer bond, or the emotional connection, enthusiasm, or loyalty towards the brand. In contrast, for marketing professionals, engagement is characterized as the bond between the customer and the brand (Brodie et al., 2017). Gong and Huang (2022) have studied fan engagement online, among young Chinese to understand its impact on idol-nurturing reality shows. In this context, they described

online fan engagement as the behaviours exhibited by fans in the digital realm, and the objective of this type of engagement is to support the aspiring trainees favoured by fans, amplify the online presence of these trainees (Zhang & Negus, 2020), and elevate them from relative anonymity to stardom while fostering deeper emotional connections between the trainees and the fans.

Yoshida, Gordon, Nakazawa and Biscaia (2014) argued that after reviewing the literature on fan engagement they noticed that the vast majority of definitions focus on the transactional (economic) point of view, i.e., how fan engagement benefits organizations economically. Because there is less literature on the concept from a non-transactional point of view, this is exactly where the authors developed their study. Therefore, their study focuses on the characterization of fan engagement from a non-transactional point of view, in the sports context, considering the behaviours of sports fans and consumers.

Much of the fan engagement in Formula 1 today is through content created by fans and spectators, which is content created online and made available through publicly accessible media forms such as the internet (Christodoulides et al., 2012). This content may vary depending on whether its creators are female or male. That's why it's necessary to understand how women's content is created, and about what, to understand its impact on other female fans or possible future female fans. For this, it is also necessary to understand how female fans see themselves. That's why Sveinson and Hoerber (2015) studied which characteristics female fans highlight the most to be sports fans: a passion for the sport, wearing the team's colours showing loyalty to it and differentiating themselves from non-fans, or fans of other teams, being positive fans and having fun while supporting the team, are the most mentioned characteristics. Going to events and knowledge about the sport are secondary factors.

With an increasingly younger female fan base, much of the engagement takes place on social media, where sport and teams have also increased their presence. Fans want to learn, communicate, produce information, predict, and discuss outcomes or share their feelings. The digital world offers a space for this (Gantz & Lewis, 2014). This can bring advantages to female fans, who can create their content and image, overcoming gender-based structural and cultural barriers (Toffoletti, 2017). This construction can influence attracting female fans, as it is natural for them to be more attracted to constructions made by other women, than if they are constructions made by men who, as mentioned above, move away from female perspectives. This is one of the relationships

that the present study intends to explore, to explore the capacity of online content generated by female enthusiasts to serve as a catalyst for attracting a greater female audience to the sport, thereby potentially alleviating apprehensions among women regarding engagement in an ostensibly male-dominated sphere, such as Formula 1.

Starting from the research question "How does the fan engagement built by the audience of female Formula 1 fans on social networks influence the attraction of female audiences in Formula 1 fandom?" this study has several objectives. First, it is necessary to understand from what perception the construct of fan engagement should be considered in this study, which as mentioned above, has to be addressed from a non-transactional perspective. Additionally, it is important to consider the behaviours of fans, whether they are in-role or extra-role. In-role behaviour is connected and shaped by the self-interest of the fan, for example in learning more about the sport and finding ways to attend it live, and extra-role behaviours are more regarding specific sports teams and even other fans, for example, in instances, where a fan assists a team or fellow enthusiasts by providing sought-after information or acts as an intermediary between a team and other supporters concerning avenues for purchasing tickets or merchandise, exemplify this phenomenon, which in turn also connects with the consumer side of the fan (De Ruyter & Wetzels, 2000). Furthermore, it is necessary to understand what are the characteristics that female Formula 1 fans consider they need to possess to be considered true sports fans, to analyse if they meet the model proposed by Sveinson and Hoeber (2015), which theorises that female sports fans prioritize loyalty, pride in displaying team allegiance, a genuine affection for the sport, and positive interactions with fellow fans as pivotal characteristics of true fandom. In contrast, factors such as knowledge of the sport and attendance are considered secondary and do not inherently delineate one's status as a genuine fan. Only after understanding all these connections and constructs, can we move on to the next objective of understanding what attracts women to Formula 1 and understanding if there is a connection between fan engagement and content created by female fans, and the vaster attraction that has been seen in the sport. It is constantly necessary to keep in mind that the present study will move away from the narratives already created as a possible justification for the attraction of women to this sport, specifically the discourse of sexualization concerning Formula 1 drivers. This is one of the main goals of the study, developing literature in this context, and that led to the creation of the research question.

Part I - Literature Review

Chapter 1 – Fan engagement and sports fans

1.1 – Fan Engagement

Regarding the concept of fan engagement, there is no consensual definition. This is because the concept can be defined and measured in various ways and contains several dimensions depending on the context. Much of the existing literature on fan engagement has been conducted through a transactional perspective, to understand how fan engagement can be used to monetize profits for a company, brand, show, etc. Regarding the context of the present study, it is necessary to start by understanding how the concept of fan engagement can be constructed in the sports context. Therefore, it is required that fan engagement needs to be conceptualized and measured in a non-transactional way and with a focus on the behaviours and possible feelings of fans in the sports context as well. A perspective that can be adopted for the present study is presented by Patterson, Yu and De Ruyter (2006), who state that fan engagement is composed of cognitive aspects, an affective dimension, a behavioural dimension, and interactions that can occur.

Yoshida, Gordon, Nakazawa, and Biscaia (2014) approached the concept by delineating potential behaviours and attitudes exhibited by fans, which serve as the foundation for engagement. They sought to conceptualize and operationalize the construct within their intended context, focusing on observable behaviours and attitudes demonstrated by fans and spectators. This approach facilitated the development of a framework for understanding and measuring fan engagement, as elucidated below in Table 1.

Table 1 - Relevant Engagement Points in the Sport Context

Customer Engagement In	Relevant Engagement Points	Source
Nontransactional behaviours	Basking in reflected glory (BIRGing) and cutting off reflected failure (CORFing)	Cialdini et al. (1976); Cialdini and Richardson (1980)

	Display of sport fandom, social interactions, play and rituals	Holt (1995)
	Behaviours that support a fan community	Fisher and Wakefield (1998)
	Social mobility, social creativity, social competition in a successful fan community	Dietz-Uhler and Murrell (1999)
	Positive word-of-mouth and performance tolerance	de Ruyter and Wetzels (2000)
	Behaviour to support positive attitudes toward a team	Bristow and Sebastian (2001)
	Pregame tailgating parties	James et al. (2001)
	Sharing knowledge about a game/team, engaging in social communication in the stands	Westerbeek and Shilbury (2003)
	Supportive word-of-mouth behaviours	Swanson et al. (2003)
	Basking in spite of reflected failure (BIRGing) and cutting off reflected success (CORSing)	Campbell et al. (2004)
	Participation in memorable marketing programs	Jowdy and McDonald (2002)
Transactional behaviours	Attending games, watching games on television, buying products endorsed by a favorite athlete, or participation in a fantasy sports league via the Internet	Hunt et al. (1999)
	Attending games, watching games on television, purchasing team products, reading sport magazines and newspapers, and listening to games on the radio	Funk and James (2001)
	Attending future sporting events	Trail et al. (2003)

	Peripheral game-related behaviour (e.g., buying sport-related merchandise and wearing team clothing)	Pritchard and Funk (2006)
Relationship	Maintaining a psychological connection to a sport team	James et al. (2002)
	Maintaining a long-term relationship with a sport team	Jowdy and McDonald (2002)

Source: Yoshida, Gordon, Nakazawa & Biscaia, 2014

In Table 1, we can see that engagement can be divided into three categories: non-transactional behaviours, transactional behaviours and engagement connected to relationships. As mentioned above, the context of this study is focused on the non-transactional part of engagement. So, we focus on those relevant points and behaviours that can enhance opportunities for engagement.

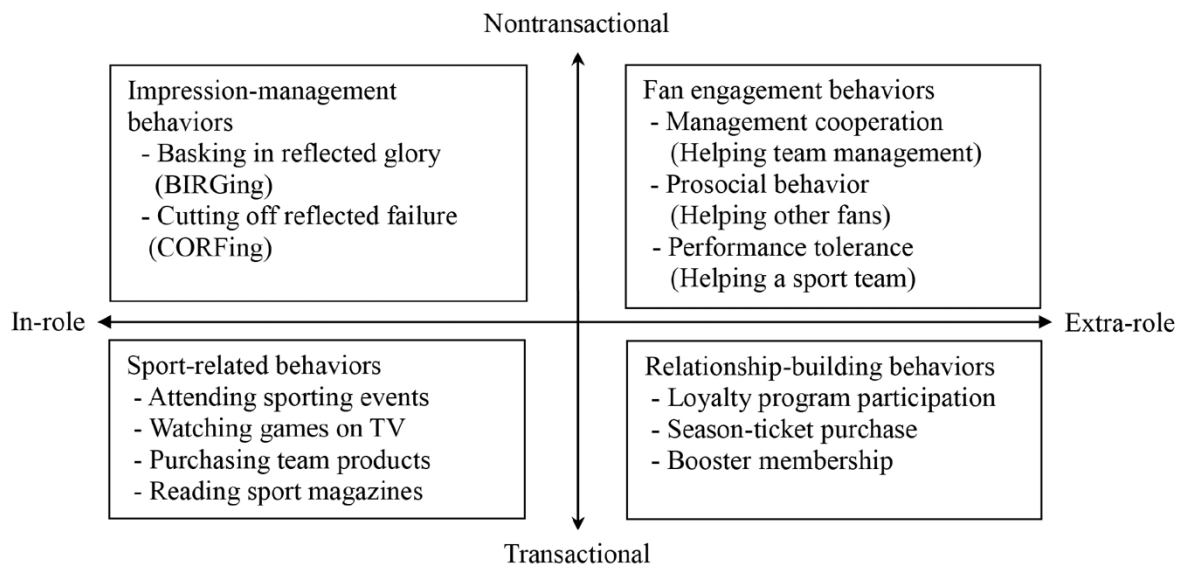
Yoshida, Gordon, Nakazawa and Biscaia (2014) in their study concluded that "Basking in Reflected Glory," (BIRGing) has a positive effect on fan engagement. BIRGing may occur when an individual experiences a feeling of achievement associated with the success of their favourite team, which is also connected with the increase of his/her self-esteem. This person then shares his/her connection to the victorious team by showcasing tangible items like team apparel (Cialdini et al., 1976). The opposite process of this is called "Cutting Off Reflected Failure" (CORFing), and it consists of the distancing of the individual after a defeat or a bad performance of the team. Past studies have suggested that fans with strong identification are less inclined to distance themselves from the team after a loss compared to other spectators (Wann & Branscombe, 1990). Nevertheless, it is important to note that it remains plausible that individuals generally elect to associate themselves with winning teams to gain advantages from the subsequently heightened sense of self-worth (Branscombe & Wann, 1991).

An additional aspect to consider is the positive word-of-mouth and performance tolerance that we can see in Table 1. This increases even more in importance if we think of fan engagement in the social media context, where every opinion positive or negative can be disseminated very fast. Positive word of mouth is a behaviour considered extra-role since it is connected with the collective experience and sense of success with a sports

team or other fans that may attend the same event or share the same feeling (De Ruyter & Wetzels, 2000). The idea of performance tolerance illustrates a sports consumer's involvement, demonstrated by the exhibition of team-related products even in instances of unsuccessful team performance (De Ruyter & Wetzels, 2000).

From Table 1 it is possible to understand how the behaviour linked to engagement differs depending on the lens through which it is observed. All the behaviours represented here are important variables to consider when studying fan engagement in sport, and the non-transactional here gains a greater importance since this study aims to understand how it affects and contributes to the construction of the identity of a female Formula 1 fan. More analytically, these behaviours can be divided into four quadrants, continuing with the distinction between transactional and non-transactional, and adding the characteristics of in-role behaviour (what is expected of the fan and is connected to other fans) and extra-role behaviours (behaviours that fans have that benefit teams and organizations in some way) as represented in Figure 1 (Yoshida et al., 2014).

Figure 1 - 4 types of engagement behaviour in spectator sport



Source: Yoshida, Gordon, Nakazawa & Biscaia, 2014

It is in this type of behaviour of engagement that we can observe the connections that can exist between fans or even how they are created between them and the team. These types of behaviours are important to understand the relations between fans and possible new fans of a sport. Focusing on the 2 upper quadrants, the non-transactional ones, the impression-management behaviours go more towards something useful for the

management of teams or the sport itself. This happens because by paying attention to these fan's behaviours they can see how they react in cases of glory or failure, and act upon these reactions and maybe content that is created by the fans. For example, they can acknowledge the sentiments of the fans, showing they see their reactions and understand them. In the case of fan engagement behaviours, these are focused on the fans themselves and can benefit the fans and the team as well (Ahearne et al., 2005; Bettencourt, 1997; Dholakia et al., 2009). Helping other fans is aimed at building a community and relationships between the members of that community when the individuals have common interests and identify with one another. The fans exhibiting sport tolerance show support to the team even when the results are less positive. The term "management cooperation" pertains to a sports consumer's cooperative and positive involvement in the creation of value and delivery of services during sports events. This involves actions such as offering constructive feedback to event staff to improve the event experience, aiding event personnel in ensuring spectator safety and adhering to organizational policies regarding ethical fan behaviour (Auh et al., 2007; Bettencourt, 1997).

In addition, fan engagement behaviours help create an image of the teams, sportspeople, or the sport itself that comes from behaviours and the vision of the fans themselves. For example, the fact that it was reported that, in 2021, Formula 1 had an exponential increase in female fans responding to the Global F1 Fan Survey 2021 (Motorsport Network et al., 2021) may be a factor that triggers the interest of female viewers, as it creates the image that in terms of fandom Formula 1 is very inclusive and diverse, as well as a sport it cares about making the voices of all its fans heard equally, regardless of gender.

Fan engagement, when studied through a non-transactional perspective, also helps to understand how fans relate to each other, and to the teams or athletes they are fans of and support. These types of relationships are important to understand from a marketing and initiatives perspective that Formula 1 and its teams may have. The more adapted their strategies are, the more likely they are to succeed with the fans, as well as build lasting relationships that, in the long run, bring benefits, both monetary and to the image of the teams and of Formula 1 itself. In this type of fan engagement, what often stands out is the content originated and disseminated in new media, especially social networks. This content made by fans and consumed by them can, in some situations, have more impact and dissemination than content created by official channels.

To better understand the importance of this fan engagement, it is necessary to understand the content that originates it. In the next section, we explore fan-generated content to understand how it is created and disseminated.

1.2 – Fan-Generated Content

Content generated by fans or consumers is something that is highly valued by people today, and, therefore, search engines themselves also work to present their results in this sense. This type of content is seen as testimonials that are expressed through genuine opinions in unfiltered and candid ways, and at the same time it's very easily found online by anyone with Internet access (Gretzel, 2006; Christodoulides et al., 2012). Currently, it is much more likely that, in many situations, when we go to search for something about a holiday destination, a product or an event, the first results will be comments and evaluations made by other consumers, or users, who have given feedback on their own experience instead of being descriptions made by the official websites of brands or hotels. It is easy to create and disseminate this content, as well as there is a tendency for people to consider it more realistic since the creator often does not represent any brand, so it is considered a free and honest way of sharing opinions (Gretzel, 2006). It was from this view that Christodoulides, Jevons, and Bonhomme (2012) created a definition for user-generated content, saying that this is content created online, that it is made available through forms of media, of public access to the internet, that it reflects some creative effort and is created for free outside of routines, professional duties or practices.

This is a logic that can also be applied to the world of sports, including Formula 1. An example of this is given by Chiu and Leng (2021) in their study on user-generated content in the context of the Formula 1 Singapore Grand Prix. This study was carried out with people who went to the Formula 1 Grand Prix, some tourists and other inhabitants of Singapore, and the content that was created by them on the days of the event was analysed. Overall, the content created was positive, which was reflected in the consequent increase in viewers that this Grand Prix has had, compared to previous years. An important aspect that comes out of this study is that there are differences between the content created by male and female tourists. They both went to the same event, but the elements that stood out the most and attracted them the most were completely different.

Male tourists highlighted aspects directly linked to the Formula 1 race itself: the fact that the circuit hosts a night race, and is a street circuit, in the heart of the city, and what gives a different touch to the race. In the case of female tourists, the most striking and outstanding elements are related to the surroundings of the event, namely the concerts that take place during the Grand Prix weekend and other extra activities in addition to the race.

The difference between the content created can also create differences in the interpretations, both of the event and the individuals themselves. As mentioned, there is an increase in female fans in Formula 1 and this can change the content created about the sport itself, which can change the perceptions of future fans. Do female fans also create different content than male fans? Could it be that these differences stem from the fact that they see each other as fans inversely from the usual male form and classification? Here begins the importance of understanding how the identity of female fans is built, as this identity will influence the content they create and that is available for others to see and interact with.

1.3 – Sports Fans

As the present study focuses on Formula 1 fans, here the conceptualization of fans that should be considered is that of fans in sports, and not that of fans relative to other industries such as music, cinema, literature, etc. There are several studies carried out with fans on sports support and follow-up, to their characteristics, behaviours, and qualities, but there are also controversies because there is no recognized and well-established definition of the concept (Toffoletti, 2017). This happens because the meaning of what a sports fan is depends on the public of the fans. While certain perceptions exist regarding what constitutes a sports fan, it's essential to incorporate and acknowledge the perspectives of marginalized fans to gain fresh insights (Toffoletti & Mewett, 2012). It is also important to consider that as noticed by Osborne and Coombs (2013), even though there isn't a universally recognized definition of a fan, a significant portion of the current research has focused on distinguishing genuine fans from insincere followers, often using gender as the distinguishing factor.

Watching the games or races is just one of the characteristics of the fans, according to Gantz and Lewis (2014), because although the television broadcasts of these events

attract fans to them, there is also a need for the fans to get together and discuss the sport that attracted them all, and that made them a community of fans. For this to happen, the authors argue that fans have to know the sport and check rankings, support and sometimes even protect athletes and teams they support, dedicating time to following the sport and investing money in tickets or merchandising of a team, athlete, or sport in general.

All these issues can be explained based on the theory of social identity (Hogg et al., 1995; Stets & Burke, 2000; Davis et al., 2019) that Watkins (2014) refers to. According to this theory, an individual socially identifies with a community when he or she has a sense of belonging to that community, which makes it appear that all other groups are alien to the individual. From this moment on, there is a tendency to adopt the same behaviours and attitudes of the group, and the greater the identification with the group, the greater the probability of accepting the thoughts and values of that same group, always keeping it cohesive. Sometimes the love of sport goes even further than the sporting event itself and becomes an essential and constituent part of the individual's identity. This perspective of identity adds value to sports by creating opportunities for people to develop close relationships with each other by sharing a common love.

The consumption patterns and motivations of sports fans also deserve attention. Wann, Melnick, Russell and Pease (2001) defined eight motivations of sports fans, both male and female, which included group affiliation (chance to interact with others), family (chance to interact with family members), self-esteem (chance to feel better about oneself), escape (possibility of distraction from everyday life), aesthetics (motivated by the artistic beauty of sport), emotion (chance to feel excitement and joy while watching the sport), entertainment (motivated by the perception that being in a *fandom* is fun) and economy (motivated by the possible profits from sports betting).

In addition to the issue of consumption, there are also studies where there has been an attempt to label sports fans. Giulianotti (2002) presents categories of fans with two oppositions serving as the foundation for such categorization: the 'hot-cool' opposition, and the traditional-consumer opposition. 'Hot' fans are those who have a strong identification with the team they support, show solidarity with the community in which they are inserted, and have great loyalty to their team. In contrast to these, we have on the other hand, the 'cool' fans, who are detached from any of these feelings, due to influences such as globalization, technologically advanced communication systems and the fragmentation of identities. Therefore, 'hot' fans are seen as the type of fans classified as traditional, while 'cool' fans are considered to be more similar to followers and consumers,

who engage in sports, through media interactions, and other ways that are more market-centric and transactional, meaning that they are on the economical side of the relationship between fans and teams, athletes, or sports. It is from this type of categorization that we begin to have a more demarcated separation between fans considered authentic and others considered inauthentic. For example, King (2002) and Sandvoss (2003) also see those who connect more to the consumerist side of sport and categorization as consumers, as being detached from the true experience of what it is to be a true or genuine fan. Gosling (2007) also denotes that going to live sporting events is a sign that the individual is a true and dedicated fan while watching television broadcasts denotes a more passive way of demonstrating that he or she is a fan.

Based on this literature, we can see that there is no consensus definition of what a sports fan is. As mentioned earlier, most of the studies done on fans focus on the categorization made by and for male fans, which creates a gap in the literature, considering that there is no total representation of what sports fandoms actually are (Fowles, 2013; Sveinson & Hoeber, 2015). Other studies neglect female fans as well because they have studied fandoms from a homogeneous perspective (Crawford & Gosling, 2004; Osborne & Coombs, 2013; Sherlock & Elsdon, 2000). To this end, the following section will focus on female fans, who have often been categorised as being inauthentic due to findings such as those presented above, which will allow us to better understand female Formula 1 fans in the context of a sport that has been considered predominantly male for many years.

1.3.1 – Female Sports Fans

The distinctions made between what is considered an authentic fan and an inauthentic fan create a hierarchy, which in literature tends to be linked to gender issues: female fans are inauthentic and nothing more than mere consumers, while male fans are authentic and represent status in a traditional way (Toffoletti, 2017). Several assumptions are made in the literature that Pope (2017) denotes how women are less committed to sports than men, who have less knowledge about sports, and the reasons that lead them to get involved in sports are inauthentic, such as the sexualization of male athletes. It is these kinds of assumptions that lead to a characterization of female fans as being inauthentic and even considered just new consumers, being inferior when compared to

traditional and authentic male fans. Consequently, this may precipitate additional behaviours from other fans that are injurious and disrespectful toward female enthusiasts, exemplified by derogatory comments and attitudes during live sports events. Such behaviours may also manifest in the digital realm (Toffoletti, 2017). Alternatively, other forms of media present a viable avenue to counter such presumptions; however, this has not been evident in recent years. The coverage of women's sports receives notably less attention in comparison to their male counterparts, extending even to the realm of cinema. Toffoletti (2017) identified a solitary example, the film "Offside" from 2006 directed by Jafar Panahi, as the only cinematic representation depicting women as football fans attempting to attend a match in Iran. In this film, women are prohibited from entering stadiums, reinforcing the male-dominated nature of the domain. While the movie serves as a poignant commentary on the limited rights afforded to women in Iran, it stands as the singular instance portraying women as individual sports fans rather than mere companions to attending men, members of cheerleading teams, or mothers attending sporting events to care for their children. Despite Hollywood's more open cultural milieu, the absence of a cinematic portrayal depicting a woman as a sports fan attending an event or fervently supporting a team or athlete remains noticeably lacking. This lacuna is similarly evident in the media, which falls short of presenting an authentic representation of the challenges and fervour experienced by female sports enthusiasts across diverse contexts.

Socially, sport has always been considered a culturally masculine practice. Pope and Kirk (2014) did a study focused on the formative experiences of sports fans, in this case, football. The study focused on semi-structured interviews with three different generations of women, all of whom were fans of the Leicester City men's football club. They concluded that although there have been significant changes and more openness in the younger generations to be sports fans and even play football themselves, the same has not happened in the older generations. When they were young and played football at school, for example, or with other boys, they were often called out because they were doing what was not suitable or appropriate for a girl. Even in physical education classes, girls either didn't play football as it was considered a boys' sport, or they just played with each other and were segregated from boys. However, there was a positive influence that sometimes appeared as an opening to the sporting world: the influence of the family. Some of the women who took part in the study said they were now football fans after being introduced to the sport by their parents who invited them to watch matches with

them at home on television, or who took them to watch live matches in a stadium. It should be noted, however, that the authors mentioned that this family paradigm could have been different since many of them do not have siblings, that is, there was no typical relationship between father and son in which bonds are created through sports that both like and are fans. Despite this, we can see that from a young age women are exposed to a stereotype of sports fans that can make them believe that they will never fit in, driving them away from the sport.

The figure of the fan considered authentic is that of the white, heterosexual man. Toffoletti (2017) lists some characteristics that are shaped by this framework in the representations of the male gender: expressing loyalty and commitment to the team, going to the games in person, showing strong interest in the sport itself, demonstrating sports understanding and knowledge and prioritizing sport over family time or any other social activity. This is in contrast to passive support which is based on watching the games on television or just occasionally as entertainment. What these studies did not consider was the fact that each person's expressions can change as their own life also changes, and women, for example, adopt more parental responsibilities, which reduces the opportunities and free time available to go to games or other live sporting events. Gosling (2007) reports the consequences of this, stating that women are more likely to consume sports remotely through the media, which ends up marking them as inauthentic fans. This can make women feel uncomfortable or even discouraged from expressing their views and opinions when it comes to sports. But the truth is that according to the author, female fans even tend to be more loyal to the teams that they support, consume more merchandising, consider sports as something important in the construction of their individual identities but also a great networking opportunity meeting other fans and that sometimes they consider being sports fans (especially the one with more male domination) something that empowers them because they break the typical stereotype of being just mothers, housewives, wives or girlfriends.

Crawford and Gosling (2004) did a study showing the view of male fans towards female fans, and the latter described them as 'groupies', insinuating that female fans are inauthentic and that they are more interested in the attractiveness and sexualization of male athletes than in sports. Many have questioned women's motivations even when they have a basic understanding of sport or a passing interest in it, while men are never questioned. The authors also state as one of their conclusions that the fact that male fans have this opinion, which does not correspond to the truth, concerning female fans may be

due to their fear of losing control of an area that has always been predominantly male and therefore only 'theirs', and also to insecurities regarding their support and admiration of sports stars who are mostly male athletes.

It should be noted that some tried to overcome this hegemony in literature and focus only on women. Sveinson and Hoerber (2015) did a study intending to create a hierarchy of characteristics that women consider they must have to be considered sports fans. The main characteristics of female fandom are a passion for the sport, wearing the colours of the team they support in a way that shows loyalty and separating themselves from those who are not fans, being positive fans by supporting the team and having fun doing it. These are the characteristics that the interviewees considered to be basic for someone to be considered a sports fan. Going to live matches and having knowledge of the sport are characteristics that they consider secondary. Female fans have different notions of sports than men. While in the case of men, the conversations revolve more around power and performance, in the case of women they see sport as something that empowers them and is inclusive as if it were a platform for physical and emotional growth as well as an opportunity to create relationships with each other (Antunovic & Hardin, 2012).

The scholarly literature delineates various factors that potentially influence women to adopt sports fandom. The first attempts to attract women to the sport, say Pope (2017) and Liston (2006), are highly influenced by the male examples of the family, the fathers. These women become known as the support goal and the fact that they are fans in their blood as Toffoletti (2017) classifies them, because of the connections between the team they support and family members who do the same. However, media coverage also has a role to play in attracting fans. In recent years, the media has portrayed sporting events as entertainment spectacles and with a focus on the 'personalities' which in this case are the athletes, thus further opening up the sport to new female fans recently (Pope, 2017). While sexual interest may be one reason why women are interested in sports, Pope (2017) and Toffoletti (2017) warn that this is not the main reason for female interest in sports and that taking such a claim invigorates the credibility of female fans.

We can see that women show different characteristics concerning what it is to be a sports fan. But it should also be noted that there is still not much literature and research conducted in this area to better understand the interests of female fans. These interests have been changing and more and more women have no problem making their voices 'heard' by expressing their opinions, especially in the digital world where they enjoy the

freedom to do so, either through publications and comments on social networks or as already mentioned through participation in surveys that have been increasing thus, constructing their discourses and interpretations. To this end, it is also important to understand what the fans are like in the digital world that is increasingly present in today's sports world.

It is in the next chapter that this theme of fans in the digital world and how all engagement takes place will be addressed, as well as how it is necessary to understand the reasons for their interactions and what importance they have in fandom. This will help Formula 1 and the participating teams to have a communication that is more adapted to what their fans are looking for and admiring.

Chapter 2 – Sports Fans in the Digital World

2.1 – Fans in the Digital World

Fans express many of their behaviours in the community, which are formed in various ways with the premise that all individuals have at least one thing in common: the love of a specific sport. Yoshida, Gordon, Heere, and James (2015) define a fan community in the sports context as a community that is specialized, not geographically limited, and is built and based on the relationships between consumers of a specific brand. This experience has been modified in numerous ways, with fans now having vertical connections (team-fan) and horizontal connections (fan-fan) that are enhanced by more interactive forms of engagement (Næss & Tickell, 2019). Therefore, the whole general experience of being a fan has been modified by the impact that new technologies have had on sports media, which are increasingly dependent on the previous ones. Fans use these technologies for everything: watching sports, talking about sporting events, building, and joining fan communities, learning more about the athletes and clubs they support, and sharing experiences with other fans. For this reason, the distinctions made between producer and consumer, fan and athlete are increasingly interconnected, and it is difficult to understand where the boundaries that separate them end and begin (Billings and Hardin, 2014).

The sports industry has experienced significant transformations in recent decades due to the influence of digital technology. Sports organizations consistently adopt original approaches to enhance their brand promotion and engage with fans, with technological

advancements frequently playing a central role in shaping these strategies (Mahan III, 2011). Several research studies have indicated that the use of social networks is influenced by personality traits and gender (Acar & Polonsky, 2007). Acar and Polonsky's (2007) study found that females tend to exhibit a higher preference for social media, while individuals with greater extroversion are more inclined to participate in online social networking. Various factors, including consumer motivations and attributes associated with technologies and technological devices, can collectively contribute to heightened consumption and engagement on social networks. Mahan III (2011) found in his study that the higher the level of enjoyment an individual derives from social media, the more significant its impact on their online activities. Convenience, which encompasses efficiency and time savings, also plays a role in motivating individuals to engage with social networks in the context of sports. This is because while the internet offers interactivity, social networks ensure that users are fully immersed in the communication process (Mahan III, 2011).

Sports audiences have never just been at live sporting events. Initially, there was a reliance on paper media, such as newspapers or magazines, which contained information about athletes, teams, and other fans, as well as forecasting, covering, and debating sporting events, with a temporal separation between this information and real-time events. With television broadcasts, it was possible to increase the focus on sporting events in real-time allowing for even greater media coverage through highlights, replays, commentator panels, and other similar activities. As the place and space where the action takes place are still important to the total sporting experience, the sports media network has created even more opportunities to attend events and participate in the formation of discourses and opinions about them. Thus, typical spectators gain new qualities and opportunities (Hutchins & Rowe, 2013). Gantz and Lewis (2014) wrote about how fans can currently follow the sport on various platforms, and this varied usage comes from being motivated by their love of the sport, with it being more important to watch the events and follow what is going on than how they do it. What happens is that today fans follow the sport on various platforms at the same time, dedicating more time to following the sport than in the past. This happens because there are differences between the various platforms themselves, such as they can watch a game on TV, but then turn to the internet to search for statistics that commentators do not provide. Subsequently, there is the question of being able to follow the sport wherever they are due to mobile technologies.

Added to this are online and mobile platforms that regularly provide content to fans even when there is no event happening at that given time.

These changes bring advantages to female fans. While in traditional media they have little or no control over how they are identified and categorized, in digital media they create and disseminate their content allowing other female fans to also move away from traditional representations and create their own identities (Toffoletti, 2017). Toffoletti's (2017) argument is that these forms of fan participation and consumption through digital media favour women in overcoming gender-related barriers. Women can support their team or athlete without having to be present at the live event and get real-time information both on mobile phones and through TV broadcasts, regardless of how far away they are geographically from the action. It should be noted that despite this, digital platforms end up having some similarities with traditional media in the sports world because these too are very masculine spaces that sometimes do not reflect any change concerning the past (Sainz-de-Baranda et al., 2020). Fenton, Gillooly, and Vasilica (2023) conducted an examination of the online behaviours of female fans associated with a football club, revealing congruences between the sexism and discrimination prevalent in live events and traditional manifestations of fandom, and those encountered within the digital sphere. In response to these challenges, female fans demonstrated a proclivity to establish micro-communities, construed as secure spaces, allowing them to participate in their fandom devoid of discriminatory practices or derogation. The nuanced nature of social media is emphasized by Baccarella, Wagner, Kietzmann & McCarthy (2018) who posit that it encompasses both positive and negative dimensions, lacking a universally applicable characterization as wholly positive or negative. The unfavourable aspects, often denoted as the dark side of social media, encompass activities such as cyberbullying, trolling, the propagation of misinformation, and breaches of privacy (Baccarella et al., 2018). However, the inadvertent consequence of the formation of these micro-communities is observed to contribute to a phenomenon termed cyberbalkanization, as identified by Putnam (2000), wherein online communities segregate into specialized groups. Consequently, sports brands and organizations seeking to engage with their female fan base are tasked with the responsibility of actively participating in the establishment of online environments conducive to tolerance and inclusivity. Such endeavours are theorized to assume a pivotal role in fostering the normalization of fandom as a practice that is flexible and independent of gender considerations (Fenton et al., 2023). This happens because the world of sports is still

strongly represented as being a predominantly male sphere. Even with the emergence of more female athletes in recent years, they are still poorly represented in the media compared to male athletes (Saraiva et al., 2019), so there is no female role model in the media that serves as a primary example for the younger generations, who are the ones who actively and more constantly use the new media.

Even in the past female sports fans have been described as having different behaviour and interests when it comes to social media than males. The acknowledgement of a digital gap regarding the usage of new and social media concerning gender has been broadly recognized since its initial detection around the beginning of the 21st century (Jackson et al., 2001; Leung, 2001). Additionally, recognition of variances in fan identification and sports interest (Dietz-Uhler et al., 2000) has persisted over an analogous timeframe. However, Clavio, Walsh and Coyle (2013) found something different when they studied the possible effects of gender on perceptions of a team Twitter (now called X) feed. Drawing from earlier studies (Haferkamp et al., 2012; Jackson et al., 2001; Leung, 2001), males exhibit a greater tendency to engage with sports media for informational and utilitarian purposes compared to females.

Contrariwise, females are more inclined to consume sports and related media for social interactions and self-representation purposes (Dietz-Uhler et al., 2000; Haferkamp et al., 2012; Leung, 2001). This was proven wrong by Clavio, Walsh and Coyle (2013), when testing these hypotheses, the findings were contrary to the existing literature. Women gave a higher rate to informational functions (gathering news, videos, and other team-related items) than their male counterparts. When it comes to commercial functions (items such as contests, special promotions, deals, etc.) there was also a higher rating by females than males. In the social interactions, they hypothesised that women would rate these higher than men, but the results only partially confirmed this. While women were more likely to answer team tweets, no significant differences were found when it came to retweeting team tweets and posting thoughts and including team or related hashtags. They also had demographic findings in their study, confirming that there was no notable distinction in team identification between females and males, with both genders reporting exceptionally high levels of allegiance to their respective teams. It was women who showed a higher propensity for participating in social or communicative activities compared to men, such as using social media, texting, and sharing photos. These results suggest that sports teams may have a substantial pool of deeply committed female fans within their social media audience. This demographic can be targeted and communicated

with in a manner akin to male fans. Worries about potential differences in how females perceive their teams (and sports in general) compared to males may not hold in the realm of social media (Clavio et al., 2013).

For years it has been suggested that women are often drawn to a sport or athlete due to the perceived attractiveness of male figures within that domain—a sentiment also echoed by male sports enthusiasts. However, examining this from a different perspective can challenge many of these assumptions. Clavio and Kian (2010) delved into the motivations of retired female athlete's Twitter followers, uncovering distinct differences between male and female followers. A notable distinction lay in the expectations each gender had from following these athletes. Female followers were primarily driven by intentions to purchase the athlete's products or merchandise, gather news and insights about the athlete or sport, appreciate the athlete's content (within the Twitter realm), and showcase their enduring fandom. Conversely, male followers seemed more influenced by the physical allure of the athlete. Such findings debunk the prevailing notion that only female fans might be swayed by external factors, while male enthusiasts remain solely dedicated to the sport out of genuine fandom.

With all these new opportunities that the digital world opens up for female fans, we also need to understand how this changes fan engagement between fans. Previously we've seen several fan engagement behaviours that sports fans can possess, but how do these behaviours or relationships carry over into the digital world? Is engagement itself done in the same way or should we adopt a different classification in the digital sphere? For a better and more in-depth understanding, this will be the topic of the following section.

2.1.1 – Fan Engagement in the Digital World

Fans use the new digital platforms also to share information and form relationships. This brings several benefits, as Ioakmidis (2010) states that the interactions of fans with the sports organization and other fans, through social networks, contribute to solidifying the connection with the team and that leads fans to show more favourable behaviours when it comes to engagement. To establish such connections, brands must actively involve consumers in the collaborative creation process through the use of social media platforms. The idea of engagement serves as the pivotal force propelling the

development of significant connections among consumers and brands, consumer communities and brands, as well as stakeholders (Hatch & Schultz, 2010).

Social media represents a space where fans can express themselves more freely, expressing support and identity on an ongoing basis and having the possibility to do so wherever they are or live in the world (Stavros et al., 2014). Stavros, Meng, Westberg and Farrelly (2014) tried to understand from the perspective of sports fans themselves, something that was missing in the literature on this topic: what are the motivations that lead them to interact on social networks, concluding that there are four major motivations: passion, hope, esteem, and camaraderie.

The first motivation, passion, is shown by the fans in the importance they place on having a public place where they can show which team they identify with, and they always use expressions of love, encouragement, praise, and fervour. This is represented in statements about the centrality that the team and sport have in their lives. Social networks give these fans the possibility to express these emotions strongly at the moment they feel them, and this is something that is highly valued by them. The second motivation, hope, turned out to be a strong motivation directed at teams or players. Fans express their hope through positive interactions and messages on social media regarding the future of the team or athlete they support, and it is these types of messages that many times more often receive more responses, thus increasing the interaction between fans. There is also the possibility that there are more cautious fans who don't like to raise their hopes too much, thus bringing different perspectives to the social media medium that can serve as a driver for more interactions between fans. Being a positive feeling, associated in many cases with the unpredictability of sports results, this collective positivism brings immense possibilities for the connection between fans to happen, through collective demonstrations of solidarity and faith in the team or athlete, inspiring positive emotions, a boost of energy and moralizing. Thirdly, the authors referred to esteem as another motivation. This is usually associated with comments that demonstrate knowledge, authority, commitment, and status. This is the motivation that is often associated with strengthening the type of relationship that a more committed than normal fan has with the team or athlete, and they usually manifest themselves in the form of longer and more specific comments. This motivation is usually related to 3 issues: venting and validation by other fans of what they are talking about (for example complaining about prices or performance), sharing experiences (sharing and enjoying team glories for example) and demonstrating experience and knowledge of the sport and teams (with interactions that

share, validate, or refute opinions). The fourth and final factor delineated by the authors pertains to camaraderie, which predominantly manifests through a robust sense of group identity. This phenomenon is evidenced in dialogues that convey acknowledgement and validation of perspectives regarding a team, athlete, or sport. At times, these interactions may assume a more personal tone, underscoring the significance of fan networks and collectives, and how sports can foster friendships that extend beyond the confines of sporting environments. Typically associated with this factor is the acceptance of divergent viewpoints from rival fans, provided they demonstrate respect for the allegiance of others; conversely, individuals are inclined to defend their own team against disparaging remarks. Moreover, camaraderie finds ample expression on social media platforms, where individuals seek assistance from fellow fans regarding event schedules or ticket procurement, illustrating the collaborative and supportive nature of fan communities. These four motivations can lead to higher levels of engagement in the digital and sports context.

Being an analysis of fan engagement in a sports context and through behaviours, part of what Yoshida, Gordon, Nakazawa and Biscaia (2014) theorize also applies to the conception of fan engagement on social networks. However, their study was not theorized to study fan engagement in an online context, where certain behaviours do happen, but in a different way. Santos, Correia, Biscaia and Pegoraro (2019) propose this same model adapted to the context of the digital world, saying that it should contain three components: relationships between fans, relationships between fans and team, and co-creation that is made by the fans. The relationships between fans have become much more impactful and developed because of the social platforms that exist today (Chan & Li, 2010). In this study, the interaction among fans is defined as an interaction between two or more fans that is made using the official social platforms of the team they support. These interactions can also include behaviours such as communicating and sharing information, helping other fans in buying products or giving instructions of use regarding some service (Johnson et al., 2013). The relationships between fans and the team are connected to connections that are created by the team where there are opportunities to build long-term relations with the fans (Hsiao et al., 2015). For this to happen the teams must have dynamic social media channels to attract fans, so these can connect and create strong bonds and relations with the team and between themselves. The co-creation made by fans has been facilitated by digital channels (Etgar, 2008) and also, and they permit fans to

'meet' each other no matter what their place in the world and at any time (equally in the digital and real space) (Uhrich, 2014).

This model thus makes it possible to analyse what kind of behaviour fans have online, as well as it is important to classify behaviours into one of the types of relationships mentioned above. With this last element we can analyse female Formula 1 fans, but first, it is necessary to have a vision of the connection between these concepts and female fans in the context of Formula 1, which will be addressed in the next section.

Chapter 3 – Fan engagement and its importance in Formula 1 for female fans

3.1 – Inside Formula 1: the context of the sport

Formula 1 is considered the pinnacle of motorsports, the category in which everyone dreams of competing. The *Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile* (FIA) labels Formula 1 as the supreme form of single-seater car racing in the world (Serapiglia, 2018). It began at Silverstone in 1950, where the first Formula 1 Grand Prix was held. Today, the structure of the competition is based on 2 parallel competitions: the drivers' championship, in which all drivers compete to become Formula 1 world champions, and the constructors' championship in which teams compete for points to secure the trophy for best constructor in the end (Hamilton and Brawn, 2020). Currently, 20 drivers are competing belonging to 10 teams (with two cars and two drivers each). The main event labelled the *Grand Prix* takes place over 3 days, with Free Practice Session 1 and Free Practice 2 taking place on Fridays, Free Practice Session 3 and qualifying (which determines the starting grid of the race) taking place on Saturdays, and the race always taking place on Sundays.

Since the birth of this sport in 1950, it has undergone a great evolution, with the increase in the annual number of races, as well as the expansion to new areas of the globe. To follow this undergoing expansion, it was needed to make some changes regarding the media paradigm as well. Formula 1 invested in its media channels along with social media, and for that, it created Formula 1 TV a paid streaming service where people can follow the whole season of Formula 1 as well as access some exclusive content, it also developed more their social media channels, where they now make most of their

announcement but also have a great amount of interaction with fans all over the world. Another investment in the digital world came in the form of games, with the entrance into the eSports world not just with the Formula 1 game, which can be played on various platforms, but also with a whole championship competition dedicated to eSports. This belongs to a strategy based on diversified content, that can attract the attention and fulfil the needs of a diverse fandom. The last big investment came in the form of a partnership with the streaming platform Netflix, with the launch of the series *Drive to Survive* which covers one championship year each season, which has been a great success since it aired for the first time. On live events like the *Grand Prix* weekends, the organization goes beyond just the race, transforming the whole event into a weekend of fun with activities for the whole fandom. All of these transformations also mark a rupture point with the traditional way the sport used to be presented to the public, and in doing this, Formula 1 also begins the much-needed rupture with it being known as a world of masculinity.

3.2 – Fan engagement on social networks and attraction of female fans in the context of Formula 1

3.2.1 – Female fan engagement on social media in the context of Formula 1

In 2021, Formula 1 experienced a striking surge in its female demographic. Predominantly youthful, a significant proportion of these enthusiasts are students. Furthermore, their engagement with the sport is relatively nascent, with a majority having followed Formula 1 for a duration of less than five years. Concurrently, this younger demographic exhibits a pronounced inclination towards the use of digital and social media platforms, as evidenced by insights from Motorsport Network, Formula 1, and Nielsen (2021). According to the report, Twitter emerges as the predominant social platform, closely followed by Instagram, particularly favoured among individuals aged 16 to 24 years old. Notably, both platforms have witnessed a substantial surge in usage, as evidenced by the data compared to the preceding reports of 2015 and 2017.

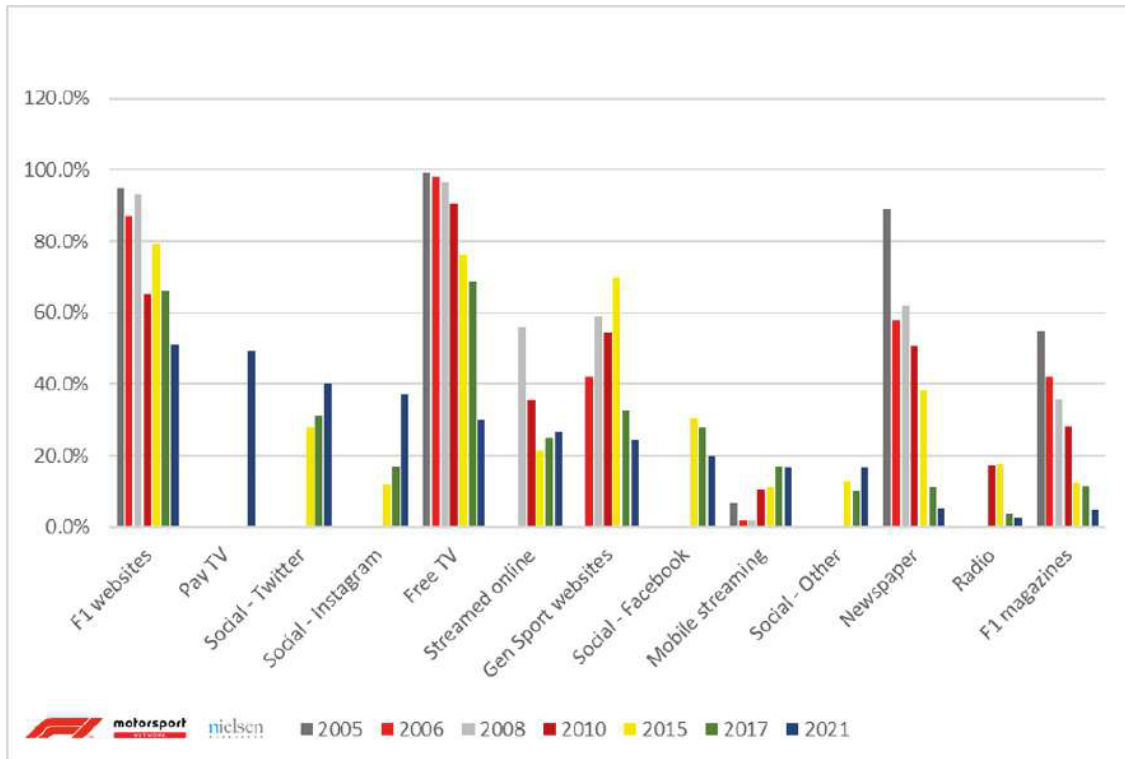
Formula 1 released in October 2021 a management report entitled *Global F1 Fan Survey*. This study was conducted by Motorsport Network, Formula 1 and Nielsen, the company in charge of measuring audiences, and data and analysing them. This study

includes opinions from 167,302 fans who answered a variety of questions about various aspects of the sport.

The overall results were of a very positive view of Formula 1, also demonstrating the possibilities and opportunities that the sport may have in the future. Since the last study, in 2017, it has been noticed that the Formula 1 fan base has undergone several changes: fans are more enthusiastic and more diverse, and there is a greater tendency for this fan base to evolve. The sample of this study was more diverse and younger, to date, with an average age of 32 years, thus decreasing by 4 years compared to 2017, with 34% who were under 24 years old and 63% over 34 years old. Female participation in the study also almost doubled, at 18.3% compared to 10% in 2017. This increase thus represents the great possibility and ability that Formula 1 has, as a sport, to attract more female fans to a sport that for years was considered to be masculine. This study has been done since 2005, when Formula 1 began to probe more fans and followers of the sport, in order to understand how well their strategies were performing. Since then, they have conducted a study of this kind every 4 years, with an emphasis on increasing the number of fans who participate in it.

This surge in interest can also be traced back to the success of the Netflix series "*Drive to Survive*," characterized by its documentary-style narrative elucidating the background of Formula 1. Distinguishing itself by providing a comprehensive view beyond conventional television broadcasts, the series has proven instrumental in rendering the sport accessible to younger demographics, including those previously unacquainted with Formula 1. This newfound interest, catalysed by the series, has been further augmented by the concerted efforts of Formula 1, its teams, athletes, and independent media platforms, collectively engendering enhanced accessibility for individuals choosing to initiate their engagement with the sport. Building upon prior observations, the amalgamation of traditional media consumption and robust digital media presence not only presents novel avenues for established enthusiasts to foster communication and exchange ideas but also facilitates a deeper understanding of and connection with the sport they ardently endorse (Hutchins & Rowe, 2013; Gantz & Lewis, 2016). Within the context of Formula 1 and its evolving audience demographics, there has been a discernible decline in the utilization of traditional media among the younger cohort. Conversely, platforms such as F1 websites, paid television broadcasts, and social media channels, notably Twitter and Instagram, have experienced an observable surge in consumption, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2 - Chart 7.1 Formula 1 Media Consumption Habits (2005-2021)



Source: Motorsport Network, Formula 1 & Nielsen, 2021.

It is pertinent to consider that Formula 1 enthusiasts exhibit distinctive characteristics in their allegiance to teams and athletes, a phenomenon intricately linked to the robust fan engagement witnessed in digital media, as previously alluded to (Santos et al., 2019). As a prevailing trend, Formula 1 enthusiasts typically manifest a primary allegiance to the sport itself, prioritizing their affiliation with the overarching entity before directing their support towards specific teams or athletes. This proclivity is characterized by a notable plurality, with a considerable number of fans expressing support for multiple teams and athletes, indicative of a heightened passion directed towards the sport in its entirety (Motorsport Network et al., 2021). This observation indicates a divergence from the framework put forth by Santos, Correia, Biscaia, and Pegoraro (2019) concerning the examination of fan engagement on social networks. It may concurrently serve as an indicative premise for an alternative hypothesis: the increased presence of female fans potentially contributes to the emergence of a more inclusive fandom landscape aligned with diverse fan preferences. As elucidated earlier, female fans tend to exhibit a greater inclination towards inclusivity and openness in

defining the parameters of sports fandom, a characteristic that is occasionally labelled as deviating from conventional definitions of authenticity among sports enthusiasts. One of the attributes underscored by Sveinson and Hoerber (2015) in their research is the fervour for sport and the enjoyment derived from expressing support. The prevalent tendency among fans to endorse various teams and drivers signifies a collective enthusiasm for the sport at large. Furthermore, the introduction of the term 'entertainment' by fans, as documented by Motorsport Network, Formula 1, and Nielsen (2021), for the first time, suggests an implicit enjoyment associated with the act of watching Formula 1.

While the study conducted by Motorsport Network, Formula 1 & Nielsen (2021) incorporates a substantial sample of female fans, comprising 18.3% or 30,000 individuals, caution must be exercised in extrapolating the findings to assert that this representation is wholly reflective of the entirety of the female Formula 1 fan demographic.

3.2.2 – Attracting female fans in the context of Formula 1

Numerous factors may contribute to the attraction of female fans to Formula 1, a sport conventionally characterized as being primarily designed for and by men. Building upon the insights presented by Pope (2017) and Liston (2006), instances have been documented wherein women develop an affinity for Formula 1 owing to male influences within familial contexts. Given the broad spectrum of demographics encompassed by Formula 1 enthusiasts, it is plausible that female fans may have cultivated their interest through proximity to a male family member, with paternal figures often emerging as significant influencers in this regard. These enthusiasts, delineated by Toffoletti (2017) as individuals embodying an innate predisposition for fandom, epitomize a category of fans characterized by an intrinsic affiliation. Given Formula 1's status as the pinnacle of motorsports, it has historically garnered a substantial and predominantly male following. This prevailing trend has contributed to a heightened prevalence of familial rooting for Formula 1, emphasizing its entrenched position within family dynamics.

The big change in media coverage also made the sport more open to female audiences. As already mentioned, social networks play an important role in making sports accessible to everyone, especially younger people. But even on television broadcasts, we see changes: commentators spend more time explaining the complexities of the sport, making it easier for anyone to understand the sport, and there are now female

commentators on various programs linked to the sport and conducting interviews before and after from racing to pilots. These created examples of women working in the world of F1 for the first time. Previously there have been a few women involved in the competition itself, but these were such brief stints that they were barely documented. The most recent was Susie Wolff, who was hired in 2012 by the Williams F1 team as a test driver and participated in the first free practice session in 2014 at the British Grand Prix, being the first woman to participate in an F1 competition in 22 years. Lella Lombardi scored points in a world F1 competition at the Spanish Grand Prix in 1975, and to this day remains the only woman to do so. It is worth noting that in 2019 the first W Series championship took place, a championship identical to F1, but exclusively for women, which was created to respond to the lack of female representation among drivers (W Series, 2022) but ended a few years later due to lack of funding. However, the media coverage given to F1 is greater than that given to the W Series, once again resulting in little female representation in the sports media (Saraiva et al., 2019).

Despite this, media coverage linked to content created by female fans changes the scenario. First, Stefano Domenicali (CEO of Formula One Group) defined placing drivers at the centre of F1 as one of his priorities because according to him, they are both the soul of the sport and its ambassadors, thus also celebrating the drivers' talent (Motorsport Network, Formula 1 & Nielsen, 2021). This causes the important opening that Pope (2017) mentioned that by portraying sporting events as entertainment shows focusing on their 'personalities', in this case, the drivers, female fans feel more attracted to the sport itself. Getting to know the drivers and creating entertainment activities with them outside the tracks creates greater proximity between fans and athletes, something valued in attracting women to sports and an important factor when it comes to attracting fans. If we add to this the fact that there are more female 'role models' in F1, whether working in positions linked to communication or engineering, and with the W Series and now with F1 Academy, we can have the opportunity to see women competing, and the level of attraction for women increases. Antunovic and Hardin (2012) stated that women see sport as a factor of empowerment and inclusivity, so these new examples of female success in the field become possible reasons for attraction.

In June 2023 the organisation *More than Equal* released the results of a study they did, based on questionnaires, in which they collected responses for 24 days, together with interviews and testimonies, which they collected from various people within the world of motorsports, and in all cases their identities were kept anonymous. The main objective of

the study was to identify the main barriers, trying to find a way to overcome them, that women and young people encounter when trying to pursue a career in various motorsports. This study also collected information and opinions from fans on various factors including gender equality, or lack thereof, and demonstrated a little of the makeup of the *fanbase* of this sports segment. In the total sample of about 13000 fans, 3200 were women (More Than Equal, 2023).

More Than Equal is a global, fully independent, non-profit organization that has a single, ambitious goal: to find and develop the first female Formula 1 world champion (More Than Equal, 2023). It was founded by David Coulthard, winner of thirteen Formula 1 Grands Prix, and businessman and philanthropist Karel Komarek, who managed to assemble a team of several expert consultants and executives dedicated to the organization's goal. The team has several years of experience in motorsports, and all have a passion and dedication to gender equality (More Than Equal, 2023).

Formula 1, the most prestigious category in motorsport, also offers the possibility for men and women to compete side by side, and in a balanced way, with both competing in cars that are subject to general guidelines issued by the FIA. However, no woman has competed in Formula 1 since the 1970s, which means about 50 years without any kind of *role model* of a woman as a driver, both for other young women, who can enter the world of Formula 1 as drivers and for potential fans. Therefore, it is important to understand what motorsport fans think about topics such as equality, diversity, and inclusion (More Than Equal, 2023).

The study found that female fans, in general, consider that motorsport categories still have a certain hostile culture, and that it is often not appropriate for their segment, as well as not agreeing with many stereotypes and negative perceptions about women as fans, or as drivers. However, this does not keep them away from sports, and they have strong, well-defined opinions and views on certain areas, positive and negative, and on certain feelings. Female fans have a strong passion for the sport and would be even prouder if there was the opportunity to see themselves represented in it, and more would follow, watch, and attend in more significant numbers if they saw more women competing. They are also more dissatisfied with this lack of female inclusion: although both male and female fans agree that motorsports are behind many other types of sports when it comes to changes that favour equality, diversity and inclusion, this issue is felt most strongly by female fans. Fans are also a little sceptical about initiatives that call for change. They see sponsors as having the power to call for change, but not doing enough,

with 56% agreeing that they would change their buying habits for brands that sponsor change, and that support women athletes, compared to only 0.1% of men who said they would do the same (More Than Equal, 2023).

Even so, the female fan segment is one of the fastest growing in motorsports. They are about 10 years younger than the homonymous segment of male fans, about 40% have become motorsports fans in the last 5 years, and they are 70% more likely than men to have more *engagement* on social media, looking for content about the category they follow. With social media taking third place on the list of most accessed sources for motorsport content, this is also where the opportunity lies, not only to attract more female fans but also to reach the younger layer. The most used network by the 16-24 age group is TikTok and then we have 68% of women using YouTube as a source of content, followed by 61% who use Instagram and 48% using Twitter. It is the layer between 16 and 24 years of age that most accesses social networks, and knows the world of motorsports the most, through these networks, with the majority of women stating that they became fans of the sport through family or friends (More Than Equal, 2023).

As mentioned earlier, this study showed a greater propensity for female fan engagement if there is some kind of female participation in the competition: 45% said they were more likely to follow any motorsport category, 43% said they would be more likely to see a race, 34% said they would be more likely to go to a live race, and 36% agreed that they are more likely to follow Formula 1 (More Than Equal, 2023).

Therefore, there is an imperative to undertake a dedicated study exclusively focused on female Formula 1 fans. Such an inquiry would seek to garner a more comprehensive understanding of the specific social media platforms with which they predominantly engage, elucidate their patterns of engagement on these platforms, and ascertain the frequency of such interactions. Additionally, investigating their consumption preferences, specifically, whether they gravitate towards content generated by fellow female enthusiasts and whether content produced by male fans evokes sentiments of exclusion, is of significance. Such an investigation is integral to discerning the factors that captivate female fans within a sporting domain historically characterized as predominantly masculine.

3.2.3 – Attraction of female fans in the context of Formula 1 and its relationship with fan engagement on social networks by the female audience of Formula 1

Female fan engagement exists in F1 due to the opening that the sport created for this to happen, and so it started with the increase in female fans of the sport. As previously demonstrated, fan engagement in sport increased in 2021, a year that saw an increase in female fandom and saw F1's image become more positive. Not only did F1 as an organization play a key role in this, but also the various teams we see through television broadcasts and the content they share include more and more women in different roles. The emergence of the W Series brought more examples of successful women in what for many years was always described as being a 'man's world and sport', also counting on the public support of F1 drivers such as Lewis Hamilton (7 times F1 world champion). Despite the discontinuation of the W Series, Formula 1 introduced a new competition in the 2024 season known as the F1 Academy. The F1 Academy first season started with 15 female drivers represented by Formula 1 teams and 21 races some of them held on to the same tracks and dates as the Formula 1 *Grand Prix* weekends (*The Category*, 2024). This time, collaborations with esteemed brands in the motorsport industry represent an integral facet of the strategic partnerships undertaken, with some of the brands also partners of the Formula 1 series (*The Category*, 2024). The initiative created by F1 “*We Race As One*” takes advantage of the fact that it is a global sport to create more equality and inclusion as well as more positive values in the community, an initiative supported by everyone involved in the sport (Motorsport Network et al., 2021).

However, just as F1 has always been considered a man's world, this categorization goes far beyond live events. Despite efforts to make the sport more inclusive, discourses that favour men continue to be present. As we saw with Sainz-de-Baranda, Adá-Lameiras and Blanco-Ruiz (2020), although there are also changes in the digital sports world, this too remains a predominantly male space with many of the same discourses that we hear outside the media. Since women see sport as a platform for both physical and emotional growth, as well as an opportunity to develop relationships (Antunovic & Hardin, 2012), one would expect male discourses to alienate and exclude female fans. However, there was a contrary trend: there are more and more female F1 fans and more and more engagement on social media. One of the possible explanations lies in overcoming and fighting against established masculine discourses.

On social media, it is increasingly common to see female F1 fans who create their own speeches, who talk about the races with clear knowledge of the sport, who share knowledge in order to help other fans and who talk about existing problems that they think should be changed. Both fans and platforms dedicated to women in motorsport speak openly against masculine discourses that alienate women in the field and strive to share examples of women's success in all categories of motorsport, whether athletes, journalists, public relations, or mechanical engineers. It is, therefore, female fan engagement that most change discourses and categorizations, removing the exclusion caused by male discourses. Various online platforms have played a pivotal role in assisting female sports fans globally in navigating through male-centric discourses and challenges related to their representation within the realm of sports fandom. Message boards and fan forums provide a space where these fans can maintain anonymity if desired, allowing them to express their identities locally without necessarily engaging with other fans directly. This not only facilitates the formation of a distinct identity but also contributes to shaping the broader perception of female sports fans (Toffoletti, 2017). Women's sports blogs, in parallel, address similar subjects as their male counterparts, such as the power and performance of athletes. However, they uniquely cater to a female audience, contributing to the development of a shared fandom identity (Toffoletti, 2017).

The microblogging platform Twitter has been the subject of numerous studies focusing on female fans' online engagement. This social media platform facilitates increased involvement among female fans due to its widespread accessibility via any device with internet connectivity. Twitter serves as a tool for continuous socialization among female fans, enabling the rapid dissemination of messages and opinions that capture the attention of other media entities, athletes, and sports organizations (Coche, 2014).

Within the digital landscape, digital gaming emerges as a significant tool for sports leagues to augment revenue and for fans to explore an additional dimension for expressing their fandom. However, prevailing studies on digital gaming demonstrate a notable dearth of significant female fan representation. This deficiency underscores the hegemonic influence of the male perspective, even within the digital realm, potentially creating a hostile environment for female fans (Davis & Duncan, 2006).

This multifaceted representation within the online sphere is reflected in the Formula 1 community across various social media channels. Female fans use these

platforms to share commonalities and collectively challenge the prevailing hegemonic male discourses.

This engagement created by female F1 fans can be encouraging and attractive for other women to start watching the sport or even become fans, thus offering the opportunity to belong to an inclusive community where everyone shares the same passion for Formula 1.

3.3 – Conceptual Framework

In the realm of motorsports, the demographic of female fans has exhibited a consistent upward trajectory, constituting a significant portion of the global fanbase. However, despite their increasing presence, the experiences of female fans often diverge from those of their male counterparts, signalling an underlying disparity that warrants attention.

To comprehend the genesis of female fandom in the context of Formula 1, it is necessary to delve deeper into the significance of sports fandom for women. Various factors contribute to the attraction of female fans to the sport, with the influence of male figures such as family members or friends emerging as a prevalent catalyst (Liston, 2006; Pope, 2017). In such instances, these individuals often exhibit an inherent inclination towards genuine fandom, as suggested by Toffoletti (2017). However, a notable research gap exists regarding the authentic definition of sports fandom from the perspective of female enthusiasts. Much of the existing categorization has been formulated through attributes perceived from a predominantly male viewpoint, often resulting in the classification of female fans as lacking authenticity. Sveinson and Hoerber (2015) addressed this gap by conducting a study among female sports fans, aiming to discern the characteristics deemed necessary for one to be considered a true fan from their viewpoint. However, it is noteworthy that this study was confined to the context of fans of a Canadian Football League team, thereby lacking generalizability to other sports contexts that have not been explored. Notably, there has been a conspicuous absence of research within the domain of Formula 1 fandom, which represents a global fanbase.

Residing in an increasingly digitalized world, online platforms serve as primary channels for communication within the global Formula 1 community and with the sport itself. Given the significant presence of female fans in these digital spaces, they offer a

fertile ground for examining the construction of female fan identity, their modes of interaction, and the potential impact of their generated content on other women. Such content, originating from female fans, holds the potential to shape the perceptions and level of engagement of prospective fans with the sport, while also providing valuable insights for Formula 1 teams seeking to better understand their female audience (Gretzel, 2006; Christodoulides et al., 2012; Chiu & Leng, 2021). Nevertheless, the digital realm, much like the traditional motorsport culture, can exhibit a pronounced male dominance, reflective of historical norms entrenched within Formula 1. Consequently, there has been a surge in the formation of communities established by female fans, providing a sanctuary for inclusivity and camaraderie, while creating engagement and content (Antunovic & Hardin, 2012). These spaces allow female enthusiasts to assert their fan identity and engage with fellow fans devoid of the prevalence of sexist discourse and derogatory remarks often encountered elsewhere (Putnam, 2000; Baccarella et al., 2018).

While fan-generated content holds the potential to draw in new enthusiasts, the persisting dearth of female representation within the motorsport sphere remains a deterrent for prospective female fans. Recent years, however, have witnessed a notable uptick in efforts to bolster female presence in motorsport. Initiatives such as the *W Series*, albeit short-lived, aimed to provide a platform exclusively for female drivers to compete. Similarly, the introduction of the *F1 Academy*, established under the auspices of Formula 1, represents a concerted effort to foster female talent within the sport by fielding teams composed solely of female drivers. Furthermore, there has been a discernible increase in the visibility of female journalists and commentators during motorsport broadcasts, signifying a nascent shift towards greater gender inclusivity within the industry. Nonetheless, the current efforts towards bolstering female representation in motorsport constitute only a fraction of the potential diversity that could exist within the sport, thereby impacting the allure of prospective female fans. The "More than Equal" report titled "Inside Track: Exploring the gender gap in motorsport" (2023) underscores the sentiment among female fans that an increase in female representation would likely attract a broader audience. Moreover, the scarcity of role models and the comparatively limited media coverage afforded to female competitions in contrast to their male counterparts continue to exert considerable influence on the appeal and accessibility of motorsport to new audiences (Saraiva et al., 2019).

In light of the multifaceted interactions between the variables under consideration, this study seeks to discern the intricate meanings and constructions that delineate the

female fandom within the domain of Formula 1. Central to this inquiry is exploring the reciprocal influences between various factors, aimed at elucidating the intricate web of relationships shaping the female fan experience. Particularly, this research endeavours to unpack the nuanced connection between the fan engagement initiatives spearheaded by female enthusiasts and the burgeoning appeal of Formula 1 to an expanding audience base. The conceptual model guiding this investigation is depicted in the following Figure 3. This conceptual model will facilitate answering the research question, *"How does the fan engagement built by the audience of female Formula 1 fans on social networks influence the attraction of female audiences in Formula 1 fandom?"*. It enables an in-depth understanding of the characteristics of female Formula 1 fans, the nature of the content and engagement they generate online, and the factors that influence the attraction of a broader female audience to the sport.

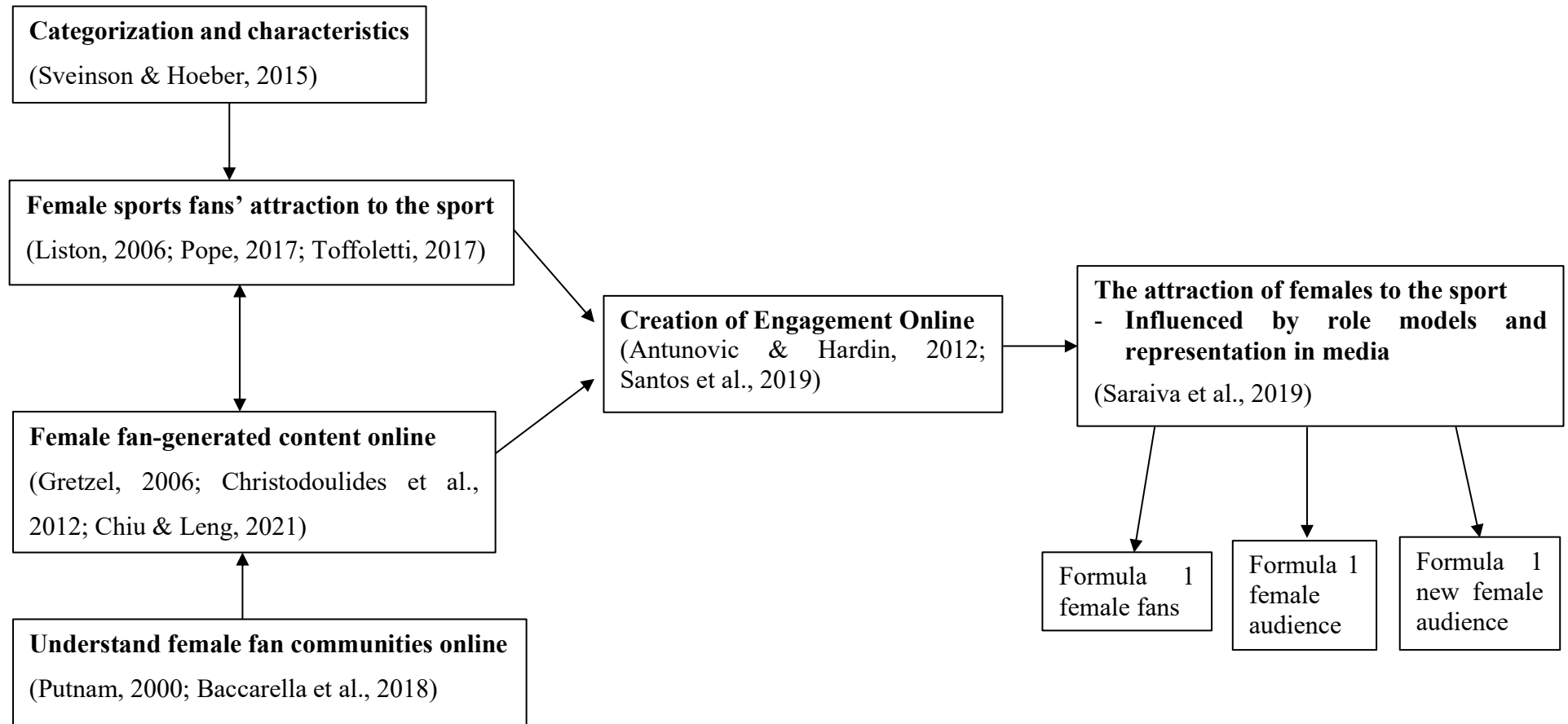
Table 2 provides a comprehensive summary of the gaps identified in the literature review, which will be addressed in the current study.

Table 2 - Summary of existing gaps

Authors	Gaps
Sveinson & Hoerber (2015)	The characteristics of what female fans consider to be a true sports fan, in the context of Formula 1
Liston (2006); Pope (2017); Toffoletti (2017)	What attracts female fans to the sport in the context of Formula 1
Putnam (2000); Baccarella et al. (2018)	What reasons are behind the creation of online fan communities by the female Formula 1 fans
Gretzel (2006); Christodoulides et al. (2012); Chiu & Leng (2021)	What type of content do the female Formula 1 fans create online
Antunovic & Hardin (2012); Santos et al. (2019)	What engagement is generated online among the female Formula 1 fans and how they interact with it and create more engagement
Saraiva et al. (2019)	How does the female audience of Formula 1 feel attracted to the sport; Does the female audience of Formula 1 feels that is not well represented in the sport and through the media channels; What is the role of the engagement and content created by female Formula 1 fans in this attraction

Source: Author's elaboration based on literature review

Figure 3 – Conceptual model



Source: Author's elaboration based on literature review

Part II – Empirical Study

Chapter 4 – Methods

4.1 – Research relevance

This study delves into the intricate relationship between the level of engagement cultivated by female enthusiasts of Formula 1 and the corresponding augmentation in the female viewership demographic within Formula 1. Despite the global reach of Formula 1 and its increasing female fandom, the precise factors driving this trend remain enigmatic, particularly given the dearth of comprehensive investigations into this facet of the fan base. Understanding the motivations and dynamics underlying the fandom of female sports enthusiasts presents a considerable challenge, compounded by the paucity of scholarly inquiry into these specific communities (Sveinson & Hoerber, 2015; Putnam, 2000; Baccarella et al., 2018; Antunovic & Hardin, 2012; Santos et al., 2019).

Therefore, to effectively expand its female fan base, Formula 1 necessitates a nuanced examination of existing female enthusiasts, encompassing an analysis of their initial attraction to the sport, their contributions to online discourse, and the broader impact of their engagement on the broader female audience.

4.2 – Research Question and Research Objectives

In light of the literature review delineated, and in response to the primary research question, *“How does the fan engagement built by the audience of female Formula 1 fans on social networks influence the attraction of female audiences in Formula 1 fandom?”* the ensuing research objectives have been outlined:

1. To elucidate the factors that initially captivate female Formula 1 enthusiasts towards the sport and delineate the distinctive characteristics that typify this demographic;
2. To understand the nature of fan-generated content produced by female enthusiasts and discern the intricacies of their communal interactions within online platforms;
3. To delve into the various dimensions of engagement fostered by female Formula 1 enthusiasts;

4. To understand the levels of engagement engendered by female enthusiasts and the overarching factors influencing the attraction of new female fans and audience members to the sport.

4.3 – Methodological Approach and Type of Study

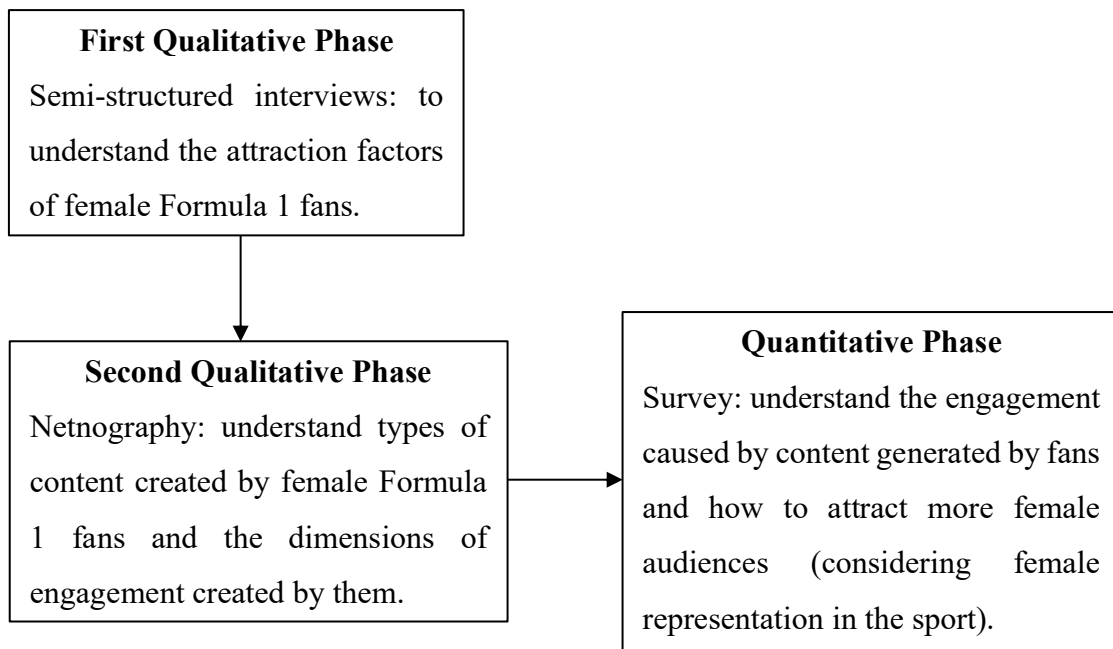
To address the research question, the present study employs a mixed methods approach characterized by a descriptive nature.

“The purpose of descriptive research is to gain an accurate profile of events, persons or situations” (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 187), facilitating the establishment of a profile for female Formula 1 enthusiasts. Subsequently, this profile enables an examination of the content they generate and its impact on attracting additional female audiences to the sport.

Given the initial imperative to comprehend the subjective meanings and classifications attributed by the participants, a qualitative approach is deemed essential. This qualitative approach enables an in-depth exploration of the context, viewpoints, and perceptions of female Formula 1 enthusiasts, facilitating the acquisition of nuanced and contextually rich data regarding the intricacies of female Formula 1 fandom and the conceptualization of true fandom within this demographic (Bryman et al., 2021). Given the study's focus on a contemporary phenomenon and subject matter, the selected methodology aligns well with the research objectives. Such an approach enables an exploration of dimensions that may not have been previously addressed in the literature and provides an opportunity to delve deeper into the contextual intricacies of the subject matter. Through this methodology, the study aims to garner comprehensive insights from the participants, shedding light on various aspects of the phenomenon under investigation that may have been overlooked or understudied in prior research endeavours (Bryman et al., 2021; Saunders et al., 2019).

Another part of the study needs to be quantitative to assess the links between the variables of the attraction of the female audience to Formula 1. The quantitative strategy is adequate to reach a broader number of females in the fandom, to help answer the research question (Saunders et al., 2019). This will also help understand the different variables involved, and in doing so, it will help understand what can be done to be more in sync in this segment of the fan group (Bryman et al., 2021). Figure 4 shows the sequence of methods of this study.

Figure 4 – Sequence of the study with methods used



Source: Author's elaboration

4.4 – Study Population and Sampling

Given the study's emphasis on the female demographic within the Formula 1 fan base, the population under consideration is delimited to female enthusiasts of Formula 1. Specifically, the study targets female fans of Formula 1 aged between 18 and 50, although the segment experiencing the most significant growth in recent years is the 18 to 35 age group (Motorsport Network et al., 2021), the present study will include a broader range of ages to capture the perspectives of multiple generations.

In the initial research phase, a non-probabilistic sampling approach is employed, characterised by the intentional selection of units or cases rich in information (Saunders et al., 2019). This method facilitates the identification of specific online communities that align with the study's criteria, namely, those comprising female Formula 1 enthusiasts. By implementing this approach, the research adheres to a purposive sampling method, thereby ensuring the incorporation of participants equipped with essential knowledge pertinent to the study's domain. Consequently, this selection criterion facilitates the procurement of in-depth and comprehensive data suitable for analysis, concurrently aligning with the study's objectives and relevance.

In the subsequent phase of the study, a non-probabilistic sampling approach is employed once more for the sample used in the quantitative surveys. In this instance, the snowball sampling technique is used, wherein after the initial engagement with selected participants germane to the study, the survey is circulated among contacts derived from these initial connections (Bryman et al., 2021). Provided that participants meet the age and female engagement criteria with Formula 1, they are eligible to participate in this study phase. This additionally categorises the participants as a convenience sample, encompassing individuals available for the research who meet the specified criteria (Bryman et al., 2021). In the event of conducting additional interviews with individuals sourced through connections established with the initial participants, it is imperative also to contemplate the hypotheses inherent in snowball sampling methodology.

4.5 – Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

The qualitative part of the study is based on online ethnography (Table 4) with the help of semi-structured interviews (Table 5 and Appendix A). Table 5 presents the interview script, detailing the questions and the authors supporting each question. Studies in the field inform the script and aim to test findings within the current context of female Formula 1 fans.

First, it is important to note that a feminist ethnography background is the base of this method. Reinharz (1992) delineates three pivotal facets of feminist ethnography that highlight its importance. Firstly, it functions as a means to chronicle the lives and undertakings of women, historically relegated to the periphery, and deemed secondary to those of men. Secondly, feminist ethnography endeavours to comprehend women from their perspective, in contrast to research conducted by men, which often diminishes or interprets female activities and viewpoints through the subjective lens of the male researcher. Lastly, deliberately feminist ethnography situates women's lives within their authentic contexts, facilitating a more precise depiction of their experiences within the settings in which they transpire. Since this study will focus on online communities, netnography, as developed by Kozinets (2010), stands out as a prominent approach. In essence, netnography aligns with ethnography by necessitating the researcher's immersion in the online environments under scrutiny. This implies that it is fundamentally a naturalistic method heavily reliant on observation, although it may also incorporate online interviews for support. Netnography is particularly well-suited for

investigating communities with a solely online presence, but it can also apply to communities that exist both online and offline. Although participant observation serves as the primary method for data collection in ethnography, the methodology encompasses a range of techniques (Blaikie & Priest, 2019). Given that the current study aims to explore the factors influencing the attraction of female fans to the sport, their conceptualisation of true fans, and their engagement behaviours, netnography emerges as the preferred method to acquire such insights. Employing semi-structured interviews and participant observation within selected online communities is anticipated to provide a comprehensive understanding of these phenomena. Kozinets (2010) asserts that through interviews, researchers can attain a subjective comprehension of the real-life experiences encountered by participants within online communities and “gain a detailed, grounded, subjective sense of an online community member’s perspective and sense of meaning” (Kozinets, 2010, p. 47). Table 4 displays the guide for the observation and analysis to be conducted during the netnography phase. It incorporates the respective authors whose works provide a conceptual framework for the study, outlining what was observed and analysed. This table also establishes the foundation of feminist principles applied throughout the netnography with the respective authors that support such principles.

After this, surveys (Table 6 and Appendix B) were applied to understand the connection between engagement and the attraction of female audiences to Formula 1 and answer the research question. This quantitative data collection method allows us to gather data by prompting individuals to answer an identical set of inquiries. They are frequently employed as components of a survey methodology to gather descriptive and explanatory information regarding facts/demographics, attitudes/opinions, and behaviours/events (Saunders et al., 2019). This will facilitate an understanding of the primary variables that significantly influence the attraction of the female audience to the sport, thereby examining whether these variables exhibit a robust association with the fan engagement generated by female enthusiasts, as explored in the initial qualitative phase of the research.

Based on the findings of the "Inside Track: Exploring the gender gap in motorsport" (2023) report by the More Than Equal association, which highlights Instagram and YouTube as prominent social networks among female users, three communities were selected on these platforms for the netnography phase: Fan Behavior: An F1 Podcast (@fanbehaviorflpod) on Instagram, F1R THE GIRLS (@F1RTHEGIRLS) on YouTube, and Females In Motorsport (@femalesinmsport) on

Instagram. The essential information about these communities and the social media channels used in this study is more detailed below in Table 3.

The aforementioned accounts are administered and established by female enthusiasts of motorsport, particularly Formula 1. They are dedicated to curating a spectrum of content, ranging from informative pieces to more light-hearted and humorous materials. Each of these communities bears titles that unmistakably signify their appeal to women who share a passion for this sport, whether they identify as seasoned fans or newcomers to the realm of motorsports.

Table 3 – Information about the Communities studied and the Social Media Channel chosen

Name	Number of followers/ Subscribers	Type of content they produce
Fan Behavior: An F1 Podcast - @fanbehaviorf1pod on Instagram	33.5 thousand followers (Instagram)	Mostly videos and only a few photos on Instagram, and videos on YouTube
F1R THE GIRLS - @F1RTHEGIRLS on YouTube	1.94 thousand subscribers (YouTube)	Videos on YouTube, a podcast on Spotify, and photos and videos on Instagram
Females in Motorsport - @femalesinmsport on Instagram	125 thousand followers (Instagram)	Photos and videos on Instagram and they are also present on other social media channels (Facebook, TikTok and X), and they also produce some content in audio form on Spotify

Source: Author's elaboration based on the objectives of the study

Table 4 – Netnography guide

Research Question	Dimension	Objective	Observation	Authors
How does the fan engagement built by the audience of female Formula 1 fans on social networks influence the attraction of female audiences in Formula 1 fandom?	Female fan communities and fan-generated content online	See what type of content female fans create	Analyse if there's a specific type of content (pictures, information, more serious, less serious, etc.) they gravitate more towards or interact with more	Stavros et al., (2014)
		See if there are any significant differences in the content depending on the platform	Observe if there is a difference in the interactions in different platforms	Chan & Li (2010)
		Understand the feelings that might lead female fans to express themselves in a specific community	Analyse the way females "speak" in female' communities	Reinharz (1992); Putnam (2000); Baccarella et al., (2018)
		See the type of content that there is in the communities and compare it to the content outside of the community	Compare the same platform content created in the community with some content created outside the community by male fans (analyse language and content itself)	Chiu & Leng (2021); Reinharz (1992)
	Creation of engagement online	See the interactions in the content created by the Formula 1 social media or Formula 1 teams on social media	Analyse interactions by female fans with the content created with official channels to see if it is in the same tone that the one made in the communities	Ioakmidis (2010); Hatch & Schultz (2010); Santos et al., (2019)
		See the level of engagement regarding the type of content of female fans of Formula 1	Which has more engagement? What catches more attention?	Reinharz (1992); Santos et al., (2019); Chan & Li (2010)

Research Question	Dimension	Objective	Observation	Authors
		See what content attracts more engagement and more female audience of Formula 1	What type of content (funny content, informational, opinion, images, etc.) and language generates more engagement among the female audience in Formula 1	Reinharz (1992); Santos et al., (2019); Chan & Li (2010)

Source: Author's elaboration based on the study objectives

Table 5 - Research question, objective, concepts and interview guide questions

Research Question	Objective	Concepts	Questions in the Interview Script	Author (year)
How does the fan engagement built by the audience of female Formula 1 fans on social networks influence the attraction of female audiences in Formula 1 fandom?	Understand what characteristics female Formula 1 fans consider to be what a true fan should have	Being a female fan	What characteristics do you feel a fan of Formula 1 needs to have?	Sveinson & Hoerber (2015) – pre-made scale
		Passion for the sport	How important is it for you to be passionate about the sport to be a Formula 1 fan?	Sveinson & Hoerber (2015)
			How important is it to wear the team's colours?	
			To show support or loyalty?	
		Use team colours	And does it make a difference whether it is official merchandising or not?	Sveinson & Hoerber (2015)
			How important do you think that having special women merchandising is?	
		Importance of sport vs. athlete/team	To be a Formula 1 fan, is it more valuable to support Formula 1 as a sport or to support one of the teams or one of the drivers? Why?	Motorsport Network et al., (2021)
		History of sport	And concerning the history of Formula 1, is it important to know it to be a fan?	Sveinson & Hoerber (2015)
Entertainment/ Fun	Do you have fun supporting a team or driver and watching Formula 1? What part do you like most about it?	Sveinson & Hoerber (2015)		

Research Question	Objective	Concepts	Questions in the Interview Script	Author (year)
		Live events	How important is it to have a certain frequency in attending live Grands Prix?	Sveinson & Hoerber (2015)
		Positive fan behaviours	And concerning the behaviour that fans have, if someone has negative behaviour, do you consider that to be a fan? Why?	Sveinson & Hoerber (2015)
			Since when have you followed Formula 1?	Characterization of longevity in fandom
			What most attracted you to Formula 1?	Free Scale
	Understand what attracted fans to Formula 1	Factors of attraction of Formula 1 female fans	How did the attraction to Formula 1 come about?	Pope (2017); Liston (2006); Toffoletti (2017)
			Do you think a greater focus on drivers (as the soul of the sport) makes Formula 1 more attractive to fans? Why? Can you explain?	Pope (2017)

Source: Author's elaboration based on literature review

Table 6 - Research question, objective, concepts and measurement instruments for the survey

Research Question	Objective	Concept	Dimension	The question in the Survey	Author (year)
How does the fan engagement built by the audience of female Formula 1 fans on social networks influence the attraction of female audiences in Formula 1 fandom?	Sample characterization	Attracting female fans to Formula 1	Set age	What's your age? _____	Motorsport Network et al., (2021)
			How long have you been following Formula 1	Since when did you follow F1? _____	Characterization of longevity in fandom
	Where did the attraction come from		What initially sparked the interest in Formula 1? ➤ Family influence ➤ Through media channels (social media, Netflix's <i>Drive to Survive</i> , etc.) ➤ Through my friends ➤ Other _____	Pope (2017); Liston (2006); Toffoletti (2017)	
	Importance of passion for Formula 1		Do you think it is important to be passionate about Formula 1? ➤ Not important at all ➤ Not important ➤ It doesn't make a difference ➤ It's important ➤ It's very important	Sveinson & Hoerber (2015) – altered with results from interviews	
	Understanding the frequency of attendance of Grand Prix's		Have you ever attended a Formula 1 Grand Prix? ➤ Yes (if yes, how many?) ➤ No	Sveinson & Hoerber (2015) – altered with results from interviews	
	Supporting team or driver		Are you a fan of a specific team/driver? ➤ Yes, I'm a fan of a specific driver	Sveinson & Hoerber (2015) – altered	

Research Question	Objective	Concept	Dimension	The question in the Survey	Author (year)
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Yes, I'm a fan of a specific team ➤ I like different teams and drivers ➤ I don't support a specific driver or team 	with results from interviews
				<p>Are you a fan of Formula 1 in general?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Yes, I'm a fan of Formula 1 in general ➤ Yes, I enjoy the sport in general ➤ I just like the sport, but I also like the teams and drivers ➤ No, I'm more fan of a specific driver ➤ No, I'm more fan of a specific team 	Sveinson & Hoerber (2015) – altered with results from interviews
			Female role models in Formula 1	<p>Do you admire any female Formula 1 personalities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Yes (if yes, which one? _____) ➤ No 	Saraiva et al., (2019)
	Role Models and Representation in the Media	Feeling represented in Formula 1	Female Representation in the Media	<p>How do you feel about the representation in the Media of the females that work in Formula 1?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ They don't have representation at all ➤ They have a very low representation ➤ They could have more representation ➤ The representation of females in enough ➤ There is a very good representation 	Saraiva et al., (2019)
			Female representativity in the sport	<p>Do you think that if there were more female representation in Formula 1, the female audience would be bigger?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strongly disagree ➤ Disagree ➤ Neither agree nor disagree ➤ Agree 	More than Equal (2023)

Research Question	Objective	Concept	Dimension	The question in the Survey	Author (year)
				➤ Strongly agree	
			Importance of merchandising for woman	<p>Do you feel more represented when you see that there are women merchandising available?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I feel much more represented ➤ I feel represented ➤ It makes no difference to me ➤ I feel that representation in merchandising isn't enough ➤ I don't feel represented at all 	Sveinson & Hoerber (2015) – altered with results from interviews
				<p>Have you come across content on social media made by female Formula 1 fans?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Yes ➤ No 	Antunovic & Hardin (2012)
	Attraction to Formula 1 and female fans engagement	Engagement of the female community of Formula 1 fans online	Attracting female fans to Formula 1 online	<p>What social media channel do you consume more of this type of content?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Instagram ➤ YouTube ➤ Other (Which one?_____) <p>I identify with the content that I saw:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Never ➤ Rarely ➤ Occasionally ➤ Sometimes ➤ Frequently ➤ Very frequently ➤ Always 	<p>Chan & Li (2010)– added with results from netnography</p> <p>Antunovic & Hardin (2012)</p>

Research Question	Objective	Concept	Dimension	The question in the Survey	Author (year)
				That content made me feel more comfortable with the Formula 1 fan community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strongly disagree ➤ Disagree ➤ Neither agree nor disagree ➤ Agree ➤ Strongly agree 	Antunovic & Hardin (2012)
				That content made me feel more attracted to the Formula 1 fan community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strongly disagree ➤ Disagree ➤ Neither agree nor disagree ➤ Agree ➤ Strongly agree 	Antunovic & Hardin (2012)
				What type of content do you see more? (Select all that applies) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recaps of Grand Prix and results ➤ More personal content with drivers ➤ Content celebrating the love, passion and unity in communities of female fans of Formula 1 ➤ Content about female figures that work in Formula 1 or are female athletes in motorsport series connected to Formula 1 (e.g. F1 Academy) 	Chan & Li (2010); Santos et al., (2019); Stavros, Meng et al., (2014); Reinharz (1992) – added with results from netnography
				Do you feel more comfortable interacting with female fans or with any fans?	Reinharz (1992); Putnam (2000); Baccarella et al.,

Research Question	Objective	Concept	Dimension	The question in the Survey	Author (year)
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I feel more comfortable interacting with female fans ➤ I feel comfortable interacting with any fan 	(2018) – added with results from netnography
				<p>The greater focus on drivers (as the soul of the sport) makes Formula 1 more attractive to fans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strongly disagree ➤ Disagree ➤ Neither agree nor disagree ➤ Agree ➤ Strongly agree 	Pope (2017) – added with the results of netnography as a theory fundament

Source: Author's elaboration based on literature review

4.6 – Data Analysis Procedures

The interviews were fully transcribed to proceed to a thematic analysis, which is a qualitative technique used to recognize, examine, and present patterns within a dataset (Scharp & Sanders, 2019). The patterns were then coded, in order to have a categorization of the different themes. This approach facilitates the identification of patterns conducive to comprehending the nuances and potentialities of attraction, as well as the classification systems employed by female Formula 1 enthusiasts. Employing a consistent analytical method to scrutinize both community discourse and social media content enabled the categorization of content types exhibiting higher levels of engagement, thereby establishing connections with the significance attributed to such content by female fans. In this part of the research the content was chosen and analysed recurring to participant observation, with the researcher as an overt full member of the female fandom of Formula 1 (Bryman et al., 2021).

This followed the conceptual model along with the research question and objectives defined for this study and allowed us to make the connection with the attraction of female fans, considering the answers that were collected with the surveys. Ultimately, these three phases addressed the respective objectives of the study, providing a deeper understanding of the relationship at the centre of this research.

4.7 – Ethical Considerations

Research must be conducted with a methodological framework that proactively anticipates and rigorously evaluates ethical considerations that could arise during the course of the study (Creswell, 2007).

Prior to conducting the interviews, participants were provided with a consent form (Appendix C). This document served to offer a comprehensive explanation of the study's purpose, the handling and transcription procedures for the gathered data, the assurance of anonymity, and the voluntary nature of participation. In the context of participant observation conducted online via social media platforms, ethical considerations differ significantly. Primarily, attention is directed towards the ethical guidelines established by the platforms themselves, along with the accessibility of the data required for the study. Given that the data under scrutiny is publicly available and accessible to all users of the respective social media platform, ethical concerns related to obtaining consent for content

analysis are minimized (Bryman et al., 2021). This aligns with the principle that the more a platform is acknowledged as public, the lesser the researcher's obligation to uphold the confidentiality and anonymity of users, or to actively seek their informed consent (Halford, 2017). However, since there was no need for the profiles that create the content to be known, it was decided to keep them anonymous. In the survey component, participants were provided with a comprehensive description of the study, including details about its purpose, the researcher's contact information, and the option to either participate or decline involvement prior to commencing the survey (Appendix B).

Furthermore, no issues arose concerning the subject matter among the participants, as there were no inquiries deemed sensitive or requests for information that might be regarded as overly personal.

Chapter 5 – Results Presentation and Discussion

5.1 – Results Presentation

The results of the present study are presented in accordance with the structure of the data collection and analysis, reflecting the division of these processes into distinct phases. Initially, the results obtained from the interviews will be discussed. This will be followed by the presentation of the netnography results. Finally, the results from the survey responses will be detailed.

5.1.1 – Results from Interviews

A total of four interviews were conducted between May 27th and May 31st, 2024. The questions in the interview script (Appendix A) were utilized to explore the self-perception of female Formula 1 fans. The responses were subsequently compared with the model proposed by Sveinson and Hoeber (2015) regarding the primary and secondary characteristics of female sports fans. All collected responses have been coded according to the codebook provided in Appendix D and the transcriptions are presented in Appendices E, F, G, and H.

Regarding the first, more open-ended question designed to ascertain whether the interviews would reveal any novel insights compared to the Sveinson and Hoeber (2015)

scale, the **majority of female respondents highlighted similar main characteristics of a Formula 1 fan: passion and love for the sport, as well as enjoyment while watching it.**

The second topic of discussion pertained to the **significance of wearing team colours.** Various reasons were cited by respondents to justify their positions on this matter. The responses varied from "no," "yes," and "depends." A common consensus was that one could wear non-official merchandise, primarily due to the high costs associated with official items. The aspect of owning merchandise for a specific team or driver was noted, with the understanding that wearing such items may not necessarily indicate support for Formula 1 as a whole:

“I don't think so. I understand why it is important to a lot of people, but talking about my first answer, when you are a fan of motorsport, you're a fan of the sport in general.” – Female 1, 25 years old, Portugal, student

Although all participants acknowledged that it is desirable to display team colours and show support in ways they can, there were also safety concerns. This concern stems from the possibility that showing support and preference for a specific team or driver might make them more vulnerable to being targeted by fans of rival teams and drivers:

“I think it depends because, it's the same as with the football. Fans are like I live in the town where there's like 2 clubs and they always like fighting with one another. You know, just kind of hostile. So, in here, I couldn't wear any merch from the team I support because I would be simply afraid for myself. (...) But with F1 I think it depends on the place.” – Female 3, 28 years old, Poland, full-time worker

The subsequent question addressed the topic of **representation**, specifically focusing on the **presence and significance of having merchandise designed exclusively for women.** Most respondents commended the increasing availability of women's collections by Formula 1 teams. This development was appreciated for its representational value and the option it provided to choose between women's and men's fits, thereby allowing fans to select the fit they find more comfortable:

“Yes, because I'm quite small so I always struggle with like the sizes that they have and like that specific, like I noticed that McLaren quite recently actually they have started releasing women's tops and I was like oh that's nice because that's rare in like all the teams as well. Yeah, I think it's good that they're now being more inclusive. They're also including more kids, kid's clothes as well, which is quite good.” – Female 2, 31 years old, United Kingdom, full-time worker

One notable response suggested that it would be beneficial to adopt a unisex classification instead, without distinguishing between female and male categories, to promote greater equality:

“The thing is, with unisex it's very like the group of people. You do not put stack on them, but on the other side it's nice to have male/ females simply because they're kind of acknowledged female.” – Female 3, 28 years old, Poland, full-time worker

Regarding the **relative value of supporting a team or driver versus supporting Formula 1 as a whole**, the responses were unanimous. Most interviewees indicated that supporting a team or driver is more common and valuable. This specific support tends to foster a stronger connection and allows fans to feel more integrated into the fandom, facilitating quicker connections with others:

“I think part of me, says a team. Because I feel like you can be way more in depth as a fan. Get way more like, more inclusive stuff as part of a team and like, get more involved with other fans as well as that part of being like a like a fan of a specific driver or specific team you can get into that little circle on social media, for example.” – Female 2, 31 years old, United Kingdom, full-time worker

Additionally, one interviewee noted a gender-based trend: generally, men tend to support Formula 1 as an entire sport, while women are more often seen supporting a specific team or driver:

“I think it's more common seeing people support teams. I don't know, maybe this may be controversial, but my opinion in what I see, especially in social media, is that men are usually fans of the sport, and women are usually fans of a team. Or a racer in specific, and I think that's why a lot of men don't believe that women are true fans.” – Female 1, 25 years old, Portugal, student

Another topic on which there was consensus was about the **need to know the history of Formula 1 to be considered a true fan**. All female respondents affirmed that familiarity with the history of Formula 1, which dates back to its inception in 1950, is essential. They emphasized that while it is important to understand the basics of how Formula 1 operates and be aware of a few key historical facts, one can become a fan at any time and gradually learn these details without feeling pressured to know everything in depth:

“Not necessarily. I think you can join at any time and start off from where you're at for sure, because like I don't know much of the history like I've got like before I was born or before like 90s. (...) But no, I think you can join any time like there's always new drivers. There're always different teams. There's like always different. Every

year is different, I feel like.” – Female 2, 31 years old, United Kingdom, full-time worker

One respondent even compared the importance of knowing the history of a sport one considers oneself a fan of to knowing the history of one's own country:

“Like this is I think if we, we're going about sport this way, why don't we go around and ask people about our story, our nation stories. There's a lot of people who don't know the whole story and they are not less of some nationality because of that.” – Female 3, 28 years old, Poland, full-time worker

Fun and enjoyment were also identified as standout characteristics necessary for female Formula 1 fans to be considered true fans. According to the responses, this criterion was unanimously agreed upon. All participants emphasized the importance of having fun while watching Formula 1, stating that they would not watch it if the sport were not enjoyable:

“Yes, of course. If I wasn't happy watching it, I would not watch.” – Female 1, 25 years old, Portugal, student

This sense of fun and enjoyment was linked to their favourite aspects of Formula 1. The free practices throughout the week, the qualifications, and the race itself were highlighted as the best parts of Formula 1. Additionally, the excitement they feel, the ability to engage in discussions with other fans, and the abundance of online content available for entertainment were also mentioned as key contributors to their enjoyment of the sport:

“I would say it's more fun now because of like obviously the girls like you guys and that I've met on Twitch. I've got people to talk to about F1 (...)” – Female 4, 38 years old, United Kingdom, full-time worker

The frequency of attending Grand Prix events elicited a unanimous opinion regarding its importance, yet it was also discussed with a sense of sadness. None of the interviewees regarded attendance at Grand Prix events as a crucial aspect of being considered a true fan:

“It doesn't make sense. (...) It's when you're a fan of something that it's so worldwide. It's so globally present in every country. 90% of the people that enjoy Formula One would not go to a race, probably cannot afford going to a race or cannot afford travelling overseas. It's really expensive and even if it's not expensive, it's something that is happening like two and two weekends. It's really hard to maintain an

attendance like 100% attendance is like completely impossible.” – Female 1, 25 years old, Portugal, student

Nevertheless, they acknowledged that attending such events live is an extraordinary experience. It provides a remarkable opportunity to further integrate into the fandom, offering chances to meet additional fans and collectively express their enthusiasm for the sport:

“I mean, I’ve never been to a race simply because I cannot afford it. It’s not like I don’t want to, because I would love to go to Hungary, because it’s the closest and the cheapest, I think, but for instance, the great thing about Grand Prix’s are more for the vibes and the whole environment of it. It’s not a definitive factor to be a fan since, like me I’m a fan and never went to a race so that’s says a lot already.” – Female 3, 28 years old, Poland, full-time worker

Whether at a live event like a Grand Prix or on social networks, there is always the possibility of **encountering negative behaviour from other sports fans**. When confronted with such behaviour, none of the female interviewees explicitly stated that they do not consider these individuals to be fans. However, they shared similar strategies for managing this type of behaviour, primarily by disengaging and refraining from responding, opting instead to ignore any negative comments:

“I read somewhere that you cannot win, arguing with stupid person because they’ve done it more than you, so you always lose. So, I just don’t mind people like that, because for me they don’t really deserve the attention.” – Female 3, 28 years old, Poland, full-time worker

They emphasized that it is inappropriate to attack others merely for having differing opinions or supporting different teams and drivers. Instead, they believe that respect should be the foremost response and attitude in such situations:

“It depends, but they usually are a fan that’s not happy with the result. Because it’s usually a fan of another driver who is not happy with what the result is because their driver’s not done as well as the others. I kind of dismiss it. I’m I just don’t really pay attention to them really.” – Female 2, 31 years old, United Kingdom, full-time worker

Since most of the interviewees began watching Formula 1 several years ago, they did not experience the same level of media and social media attraction that the sport enjoys today. This is evident in their responses regarding **what initially drew them to Formula 1**. For the majority, the attraction stemmed from their family, as race days on Sundays were a regular television event, leading them to watch the sport:

“I have always remembered watching Formula One since I was a kid. My father was a really big fan of the sport, and he would watch the races.” – Female 1, 25 years old, Portugal, student

One interviewee, in particular, mentioned that the Hungarian Grand Prix of 2020 specifically piqued her interest, prompting her to start watching Formula 1 more regularly:

“So long story short, it was in 2020 when I was dating this guy that liked Formula 1 and watched Hungarian Grand Prix. That was officially when I started to actually watch F1” – Female 3, 28 years old, Poland, full-time worker.

Finally, the last topic examined **the increased focus on the drivers and its potential influence in attracting more fans**. All of the interviewed females responded affirmatively, arguing that greater focus and coverage of the drivers, whether on television or social media, enhances their sense of connection and familiarity with the drivers as individuals, not merely as Formula 1 competitors:

“Yeah, I do agree with that now. Because they are the sole focus of it. Every like they're who you see on TV. They're the people who are driving it.” .” – Female 2, 31 years old, United Kingdom, full-time worker

This more personal connection, combined with the popularity of the Netflix series "Drive to Survive," creates an ideal scenario for attracting fans across different age groups and increasing female interest in Formula 1:

“So, it's a good thing we get to know them and they're not just this person on TV, you know, they are human. They do have feelings. So, to me it is important in a way for the driver and to know the team because it's like it's maybe like a personal feeling is like you feel that little bit closer to him because you know a bit more about it.” – Female 4, 38 years old, United Kingdom, full-time worker

5.1.2 – Results from Netnography

The netnography phase spanned a one-month observation period in June 2024. Throughout this time, all content posted on the selected profiles was systematically observed, focusing on metrics such as the number of likes, the nature and content of comments, and the type of content shared. This approach enabled a comparative analysis between different weekends and weeks, specifically contrasting periods with a Formula 1 Grand Prix against those without. During June 2024, the Formula 1 calendar included

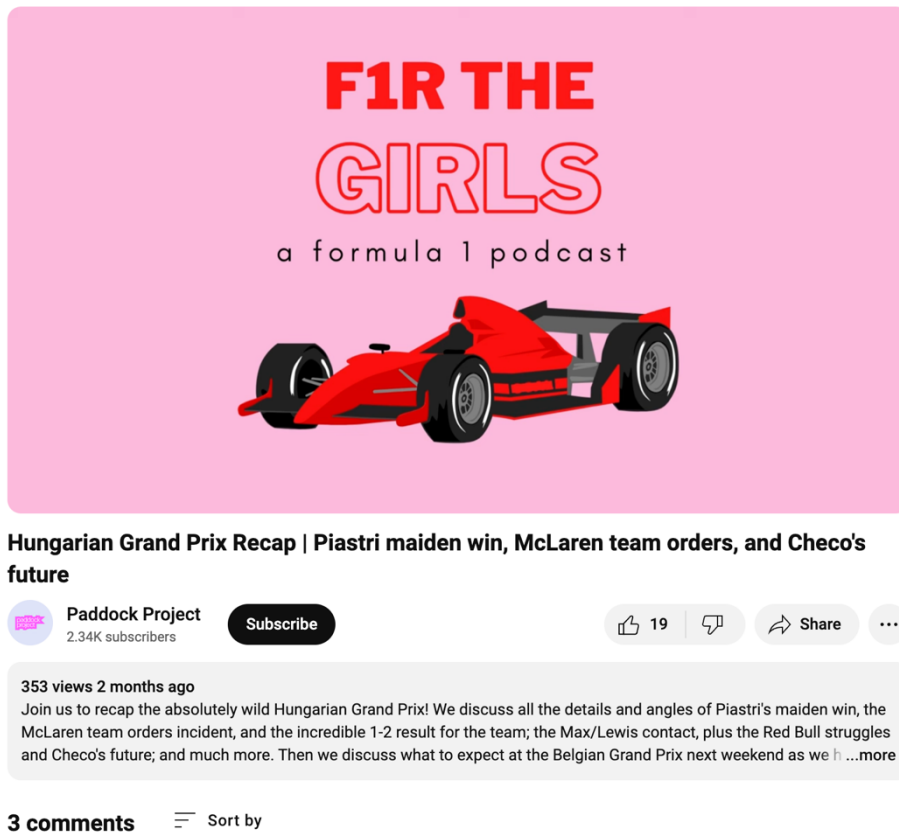
three Grand Prix events: the Canadian Grand Prix, held from June 7 to June 9; the Spanish Grand Prix, from June 21 to June 23; and the Austrian Grand Prix, which took place from June 28 to June 30. The analysis focused on content type variations and the corresponding engagement levels. A comprehensive list of the links to the content observed during this phase is provided in Appendix I.

The netnographic observation included three profiles: one on YouTube and two on Instagram. Among the Instagram profiles, there is a notable disparity in the number of followers, with one community significantly larger than the other, as detailed in Table 3.

The analysis was conducted carefully considering the objectives outlined in Table 4. A structured guide for the observation was employed to ensure these objectives were met. This guide was essential in maintaining a clear focus on the specific elements that required attention throughout the observation process, as detailed in Table 4. This approach ensured that the researcher consistently addressed all relevant aspects without deviating from the study's aims. The various categories analysed across all content included the level of engagement, the content format, the tone conveyed by the content, variations in interaction across different social media channels, and a comparative analysis aimed at identifying which types of content attract the most attention and generate the highest levels of engagement (Stavros et al., 2014; Chan & Li, 2010; Reinharz, 1992; Santos et al., 2019).

For the YouTube profile, due to the nature of video content, which requires more time and effort to produce and edit, fewer posts were made during the observation period in July. It is also noteworthy that some videos were composed solely of audio content, presented in a podcast format, without any accompanying visual elements, as illustrated in Figure 5. This type of content was the least popular among the audience.

Figure 5 – Example of content with only audio



F1R THE GIRLS
a formula 1 podcast

Hungarian Grand Prix Recap | PIASTRI maiden win, McLaren team orders, and Checo's future

Paddock Project
2.34K subscribers **Subscribe**

19 **Share**

353 views 2 months ago

Join us to recap the absolutely wild Hungarian Grand Prix! We discuss all the details and angles of Piastri's maiden win, the McLaren team orders incident, and the incredible 1-2 result for the team; the Max/Lewis contact, plus the Red Bull struggles and Checo's future; and much more. Then we discuss what to expect at the Belgian Grand Prix next weekend as we h ...more

3 comments Sort by

Source: YouTube video named “Hungarian Grand Prix Recap | PIASTRI maiden win, McLaren team orders, and Checo's future”

In contrast, the most popular content included recaps of Formula 1 Grand Prix weekends and more personalized videos featuring drivers, such as Q&A sessions with questions submitted by community members, similar to the one shown in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6 – Example of the most popular content on the YouTube profile



Alex Albon Live From Montreal | Confidence in Williams, Thailand GP prospects, and more



Paddock Project
2.34K subscribers

Subscribe

👍 84



➦ Share



1k views 3 months ago

Alex Albon gives us the inside scoop on what gave him the confidence to re-sign with Williams, what it's been like to take on a leadership role at the team, his relationship with James Vowles, how his Thai identity has played a role in his motorsport career, and more. Then we dive into some rapid fire: who on the grid would he like to be stranded on an island with h...more

14 comments ≡ Sort by

Source: YouTube video named “Alex Albon Live From Montreal | Confidence in Williams, Thailand GP prospects, and more”

In this type of content, the tone of the comments is notably enthusiastic, with female fans expressing considerable praise for this format, as illustrated in Figure 7.

Figure 7 – Comments on the most popular video on the YouTube profile

I love this interview! Alex is a gem, I love that guy. Literally listened to this on pod in the shower and then a second time here at my desk. Tiggy you are ADORABLE in this video 😊

👍 5 🗨️ 🧡 To respond

📄 • 1 answer

Living vicariously through all of your adventures!! I love the podcast ❤️❤️ Also, I think Alex is as charismatic as Danny just a different vibe. 😎😎

👍 2 🗨️ 🧡 To respond

📄 • 1 answer

I love Alex! I'm so glad yall mentioned the YouTube channel on the podcast. I didn't realize there were video components and sometimes. ❤️❤️

👍 2 🗨️ 🧡 To respond

📄 • 1 answer

I loved this! Such a nice interview. I had no idea he was so tall!

👍 🗨️ 🧡 To respond

I loved this interview, your podcast is like my favorite ever!

👍 1 🗨️ 🧡 To respond

📄 • 1 answer

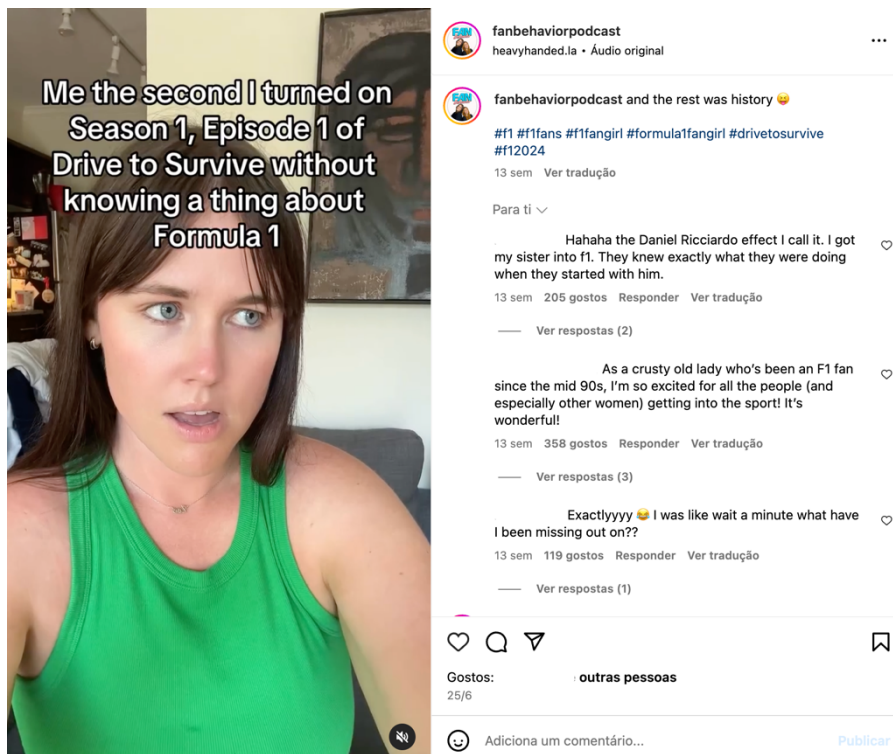
Great interview! I love yalls podcast sm it's getting me to look into doing mechanical engineering in the future. Thank you guys sm ❤️❤️

Source: YouTube comments on the video named “Alex Albon Live From Montreal | Confidence in Williams, Thailand GP prospects, and more”

The Instagram profiles demonstrated overall greater popularity compared to the YouTube profile, though notable differences existed between them, particularly in terms of influence, community guidelines, and the number of followers, all of which affected the levels of engagement.

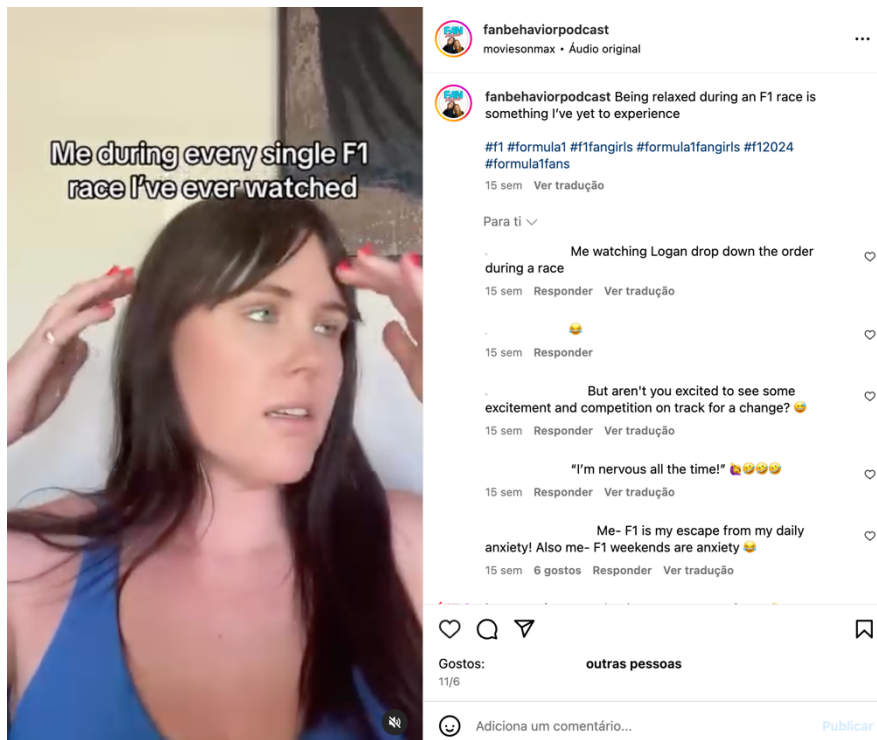
In the smaller community, the most popular and highly engaged content centred on a general passion for motorsports, humorous posts, and praise for the Netflix series *Drive to Survive*. Examples of such posts are presented in Figure 8 and Figure 9.

Figure 8 – Short video in Instagram profile praising *Drive to Survive* series



Source: Instagram Reels

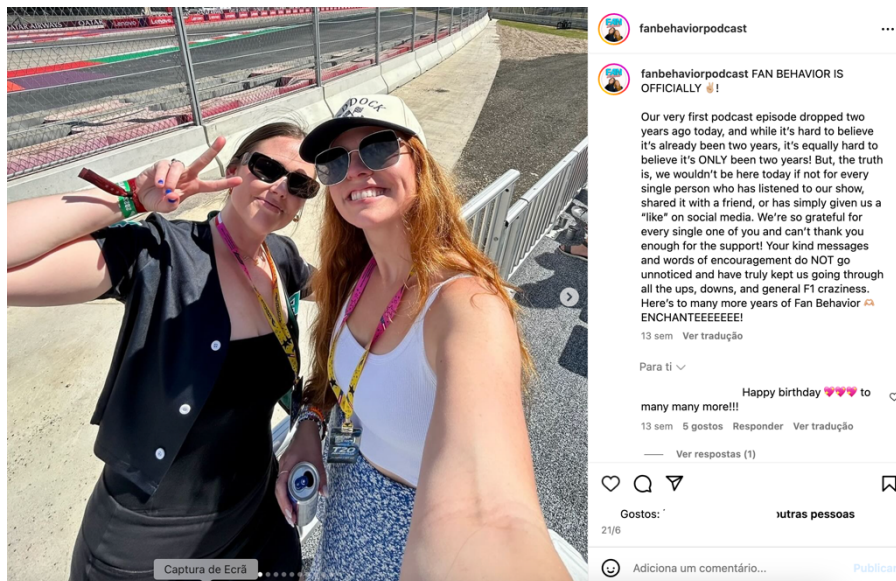
Figure 9 – Short video in Instagram profile with funny tone



Source: Instagram Reels

Additionally, content that celebrated shared experiences and unity within the female fan community was also highly popular and received significant engagement, as seen in Figure 10.

Figure 10 – Instagram post praising the community and celebrating 2 years of existence



Source: Instagram

In the larger community, the content is primarily focused on highlighting the presence and achievements of female athletes within various motorsport communities. The most popular and highly engaged content centered around the F1 Academy races (Figure 11), reflecting the community's strong interest in promoting female representation in the sport.

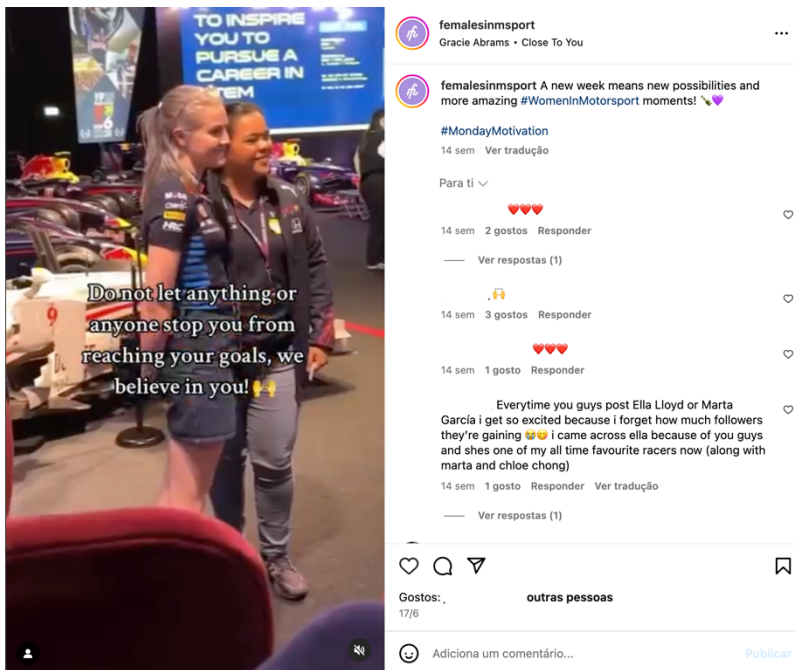
Figure 11 – Instagram post with information about a F1 Academy practice



Source: Instagram

The second most engaged content celebrated the love, passion, and enthusiasm that female fans share for motorsport within the community (Figure 12).

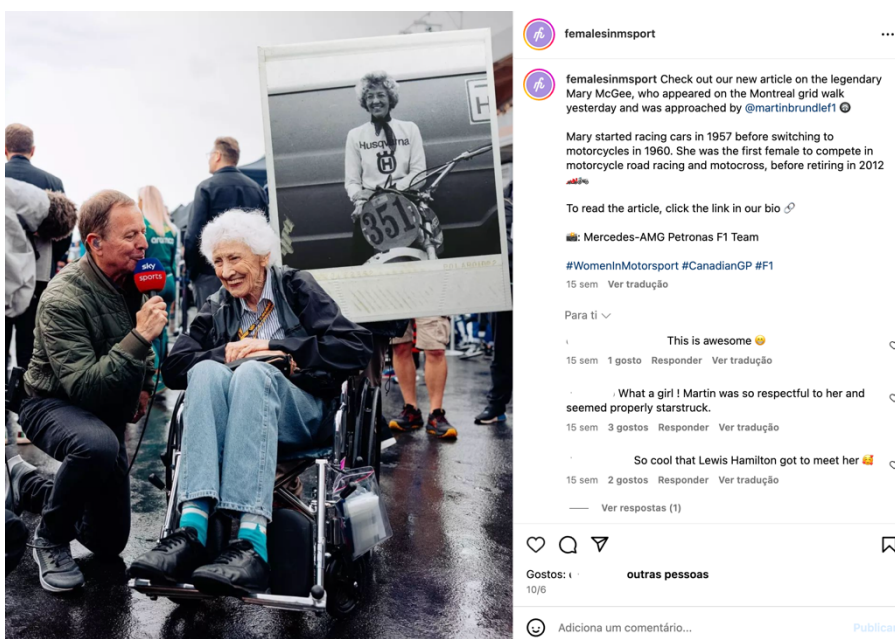
Figure 12 – Short Instagram video celebrating women in motorsport



Source: Instagram

Additionally, content that showcased the stories and accomplishments of women in motorsport (Figure 13)—whether as athletes or professionals in different categories—also garnered significant popularity and engagement.

Figure 13 – Instagram post publicising an article about a historical motorsport female figure



Source: Instagram

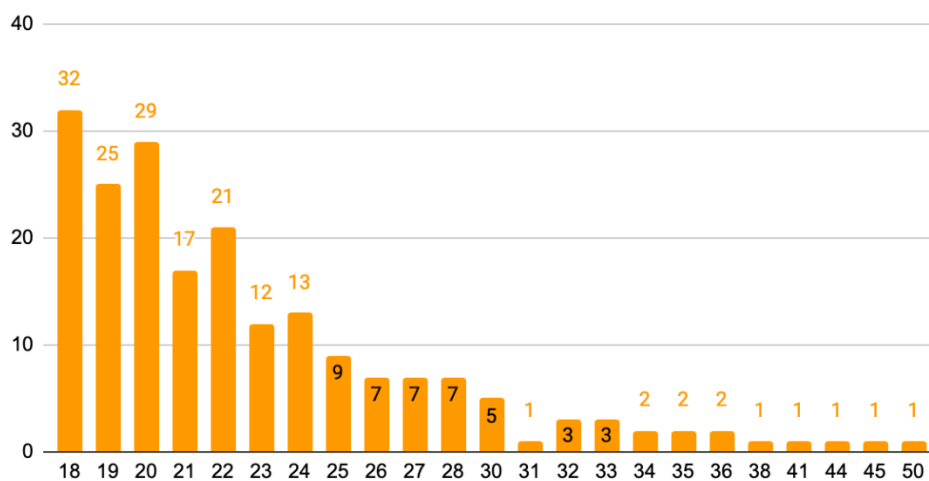
5.1.3 – Results from Survey

The survey, as detailed in Appendix B, was adapted for distribution through Google Forms to facilitate efficient data collection from the study's target population. The survey was disseminated online via social media platforms, specifically through posts in female fan communities and on various community profiles. It remained accessible from July 29, 2024, until August 12, 2024. All responses collected from the survey are presented in graphics in Appendix J. When distributing the survey, it was explicitly stated that the target demographic was female fans aged 18 to 50, ensuring the exclusion of responses that would be outside the scope of the study and thereby maintaining the validity of the data collected.

Sample characteristic's

This approach ensured that all responses accepted to proceed with the study were pertinent to the study, with the demographic profile consisting entirely of 202 females (100%), within the specified age range of 18 to 50. Notably, most of the sample (73,8%) fell within the 18 to 24 age range. This age range of the demographic profile of the participants can be observed in Figure 14 below.

Figure 14 – Age range of the participants

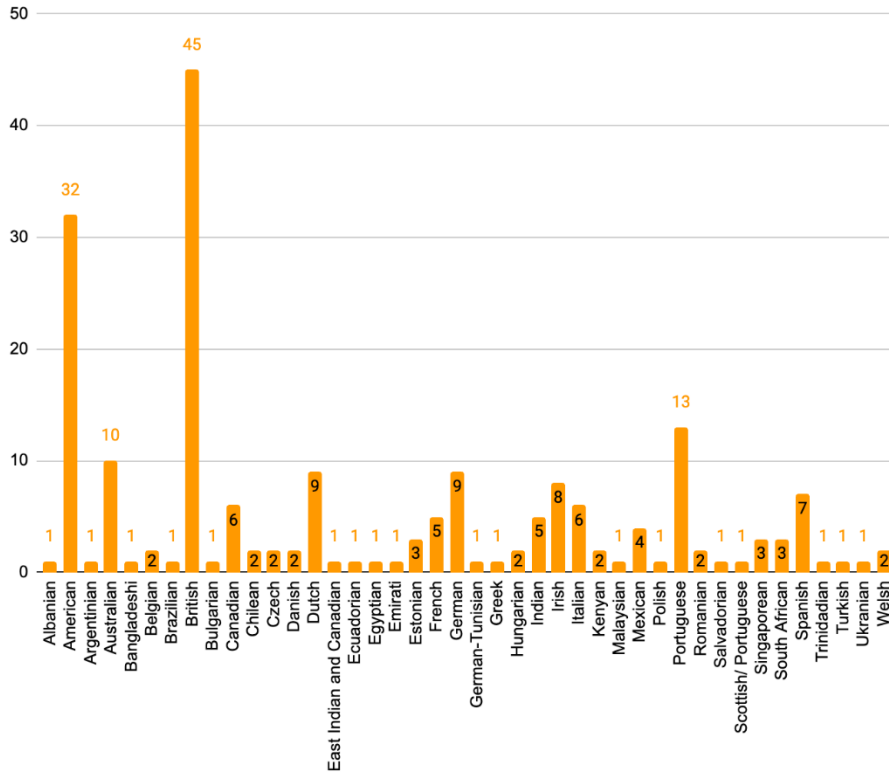


Source: Google Forms results from the survey elaborated by the author to the question “**What’s your age?**”

Concerning the nationality and country of residence of the respondents, there is a notable predominance of British and American participants, accounting for 38,1% of the

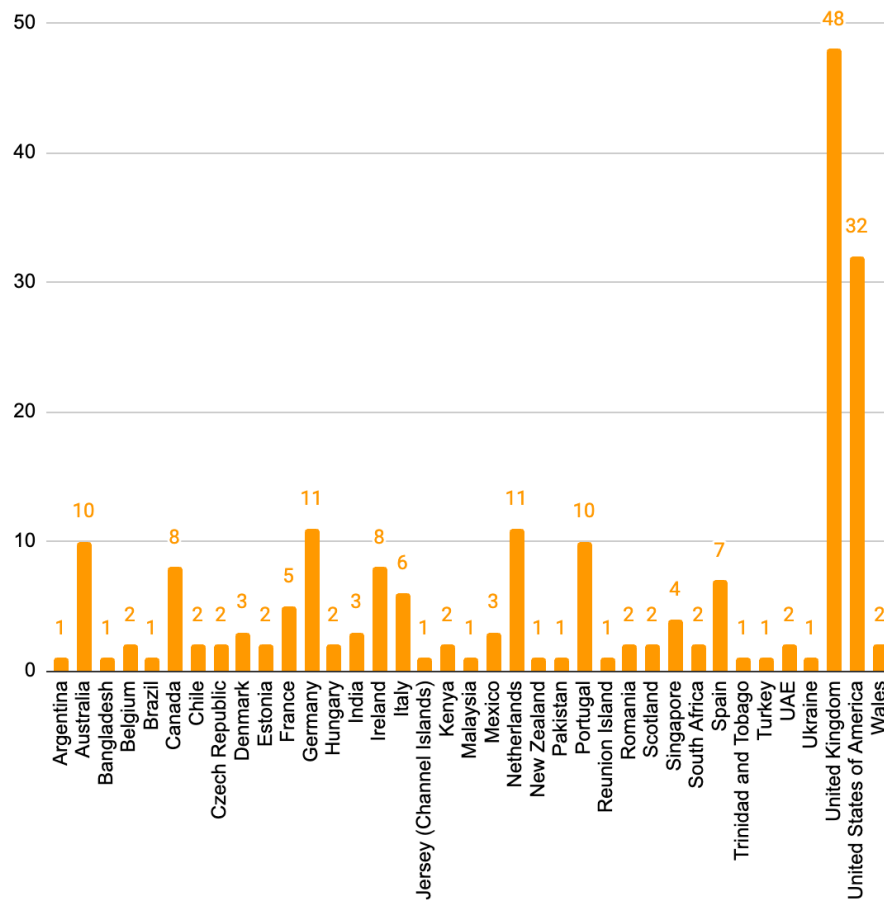
sample (Figure 15), with the United Kingdom and the United States representing 39,6% of the respondents' countries of residence (Figure 16).

Figure 15 – Nationality of the Participants



Source: Google Forms results from the survey elaborated by the author to the question “Nationality:”

Figure 16 – Countries of Residence of the Participants



Source: Google Forms results from the survey elaborated by the author to the question “**Country of Residence:**”

It is important to highlight, however, that the survey reached a diverse range of nationalities and countries, contributing to the representativeness of the sample in capturing the global nature of the female Formula 1 fandom. The occupational distribution of respondents aligns with the age demographics, as the majority of participants are students, 67,8% (137), followed by full-time workers, 24,8% (50).

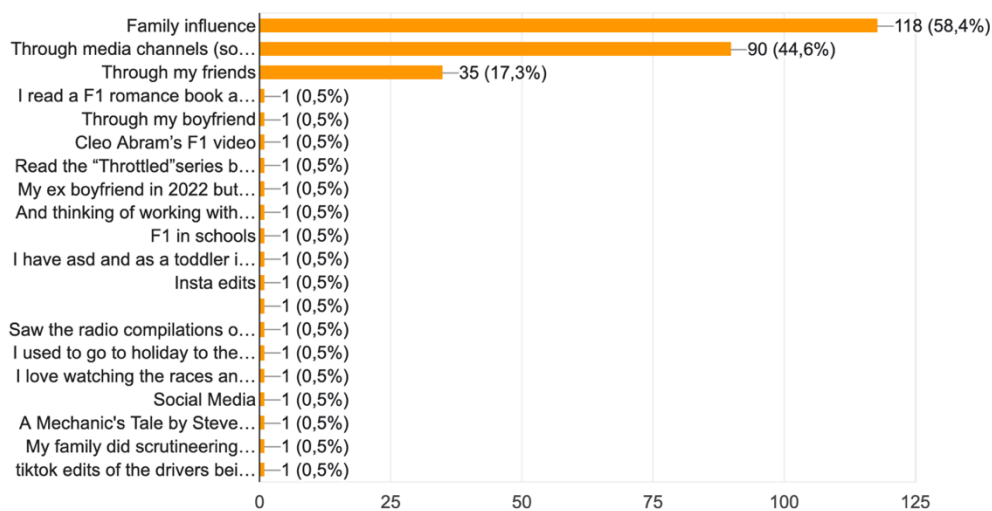
Attraction of female audience to Formula 1

In the section designed to explore the female audience's attraction to Formula 1, the questions focused on identifying when they watch Formula 1, what initially sparked their interest, and how these aspects align with the characteristics identified from the interviews. These characteristics will be further analysed in the subsequent discussion of results.

The majority of respondents began watching Formula 1 after 2018, with 75,2% (152) of the sample starting between 2018 and 2024. The **initial attraction to the sport**

predominantly aligns with the reasons discussed in the literature review of this study. However, there are some additional factors, such as the influence of boyfriends who were Formula 1 fans, exposure to content on social media, and interest sparked by books related to the sport, as illustrated in Figure 17 below. **Family influence** emerges as the primary reason for female fans' interest in Formula 1, with 58,4% (118) of respondents citing it as the main factor. In second there is the attraction **through media channels (social media, Netflix's Drive to Survive, etc.)**, however, given the younger demographic, media exposure also plays a significant role, being the second most common reason, with 44,6% of respondents indicating that media sparked their interest in the sport. And the third most answer reason for attraction was **through friends**, with 17,3% (35) of the participants answering this option.

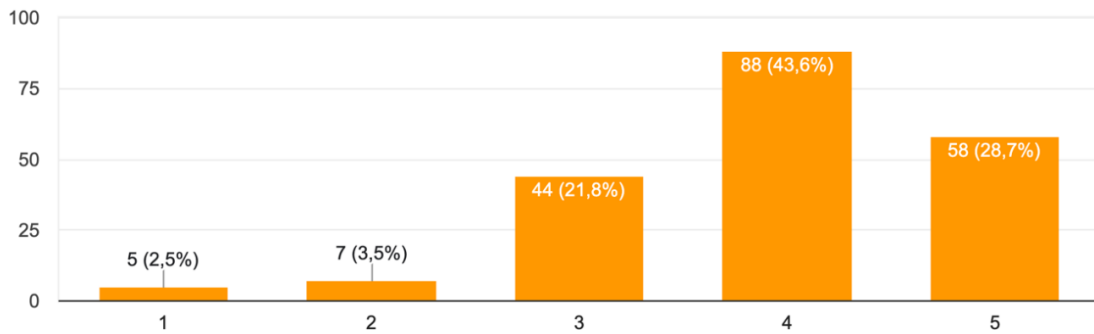
Figure 17 – Factors that sparked the interest of the respondents in Formula 1 (Selected all that applied)



Source: Google Forms results from the survey elaborated by the author to the question “**What initially sparked the interest in Formula 1? (Select all that apply)**”

Regarding the **significance of passion in identifying as a true female Formula 1 fan**, the majority of respondents emphasised its importance, as shown in Figure 18. Specifically, 43,6% (88) respondents indicated that passion is important, and 28,7% (58) respondents noted it as very important. Altogether, 72,3% (146) of the sample acknowledged the importance of passion in their engagement with the sport.

Figure 18 – Importance of passion to be a true female Formula 1 fan



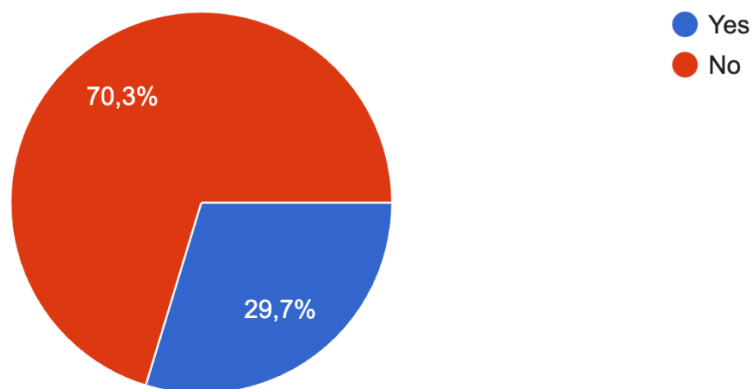
Source: Google Forms results from the survey elaborated by the author to the question “**Do you think it is important to be passionate about Formula 1?**”

Caption:

1. Not important at all
2. Not important
3. It doesn't make a difference
4. It's important
5. It's very important

Attendance at a Grand Prix was reported to have a low impact among survey respondents (Figure 19). A significant 70,3% (142) indicated that they had never attended a Grand Prix event. Among the 29,7% (60) who had attended, 56,6% (34) reported attending only a single Grand Prix.

Figure 19 – Attendance at a Formula 1 Grand Prix

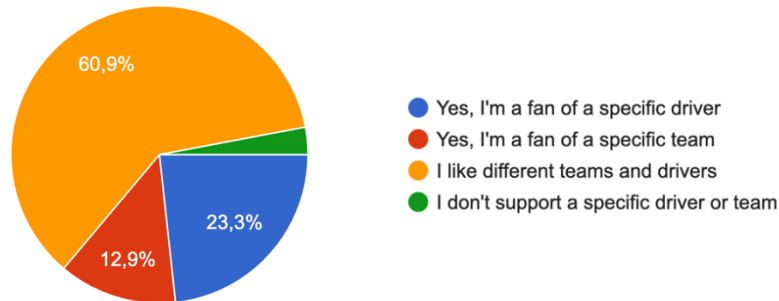


Source: Google Forms results from the survey elaborated by the author to the question “**Have you ever attended a Formula 1 Grand Prix?**”

The subsequent two questions focused on **whether respondents identified as fans of a specific driver, team, or Formula 1 as a whole**. The majority of respondents, 60,9% (123) reported supporting various teams and drivers. This was followed by those

who specifically supported a particular driver, 23,3% (47), and those who supported a specific team, 12,9% (26). This is illustrated in Figure 20.

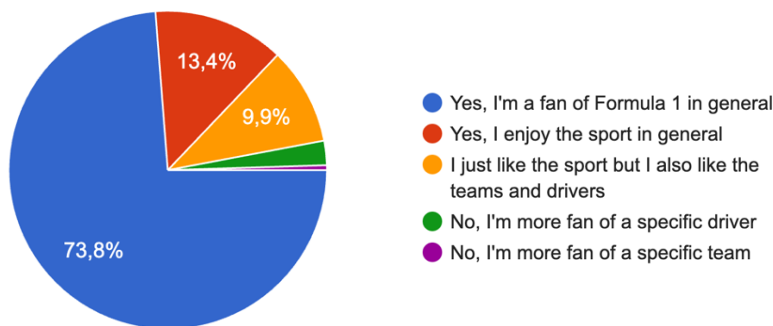
Figure 20 – Identification as a fan of a specific driver/team



Source: Google Forms results from the survey elaborated by the author to the question “**Are you a fan of a specific team/driver?**”

In terms of general fandom the majority, 73,8% (149), **identified as fans of Formula 1 as a whole** (Figure 21). Additionally, 13,4% (27) indicated that they enjoy the sport but do not consider themselves general fans, while 9,9% (20) expressed an interest in the sport alongside a preference for specific teams and drivers.

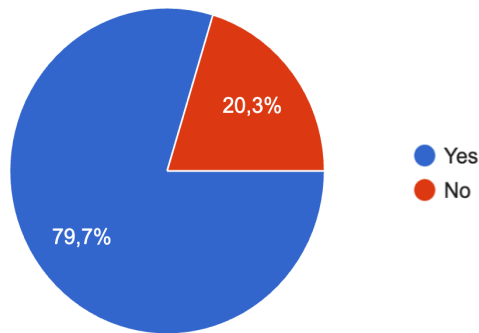
Figure 21 – Identification as a general fan of Formula 1



Source: Google Forms results from the survey elaborated by the author to the question “**Are you a fan of Formula 1 in general?**”

The following section addressed the topic of **role models and female representation within the media as it pertains to Formula 1**. A significant portion of respondents, 79,7% (161), affirmed that they admire female personalities within the sport, as seen in Figure 22 below.

Figure 22 – Admiration of a female Formula 1 personality

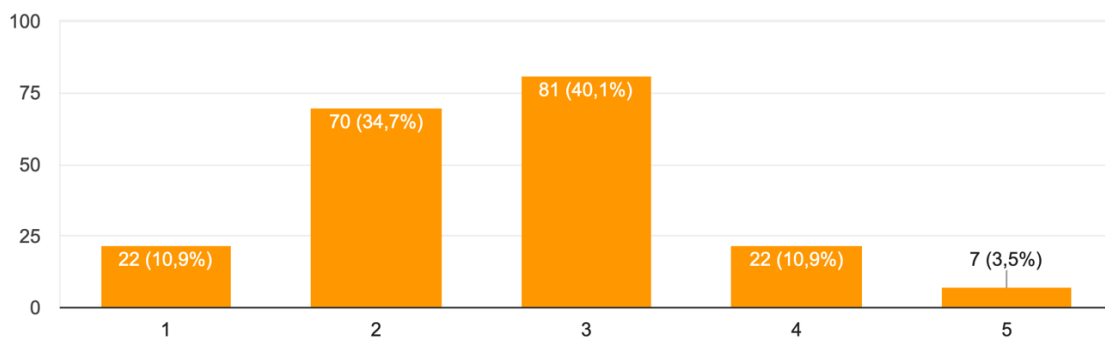


Source: Google Forms results from the survey elaborated by the author to the question “**Do you admire any female Formula 1 personalities?**”

Those who responded affirmatively were further asked to identify the specific individuals they admire. The responses varied widely, encompassing female journalists involved in live commentary, F1 Academy drivers, content creators—both those associated with communities and independent ones—team members, engineers, strategists, female figures in other motorsport series, and several respondents expressed admiration for all women working within Formula 1.

The focus of the subsequent two questions was on **representation within the sport**. Regarding perceptions of female representation in media coverage of women working in Formula 1, 34,7% of the respondents (70) indicated that the representation is very low, while 40,1% of the respondents (80) felt that females could receive greater representation than currently provided (Figure 23).

Figure 23 – Feelings about the representation in the Media of the females that work in Formula 1



Source: Google Forms results from the survey elaborated by the author to the question “**How do you feel about the representation in the Media of the females that work in Formula 1?**”

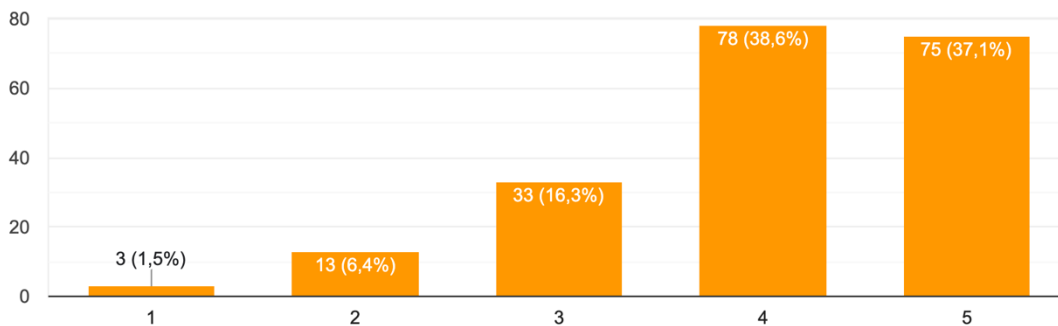
Caption:

1. They don't have representation at all

2. They have a very low representation
3. They could have more representation
4. The representation of females is enough
5. There is a very good representation

When queried about the **potential impact of increased female representation in Formula 1 on the size of the female audience** (Figure 24), 75,7% (153) of the respondents affirmed this perspective. Specifically, 38,6% (78) indicated their agreement, while 37,1% (75) strongly agreed.

Figure 24 – Impact of female representation in Formula 1 on attracting female audience



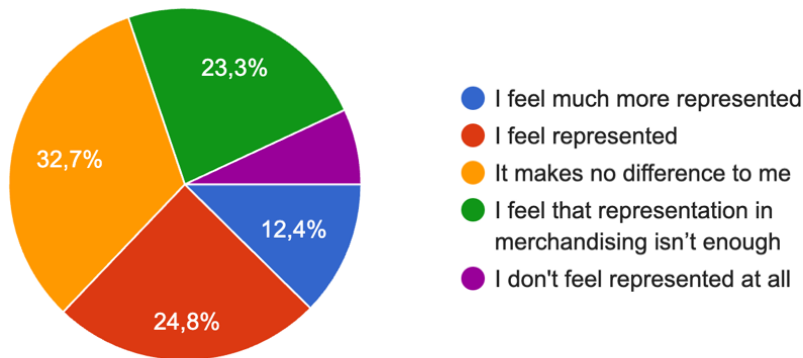
Source: Google Forms results from the survey elaborated by the author to the question “Do you think that if there were more female representation in Formula 1, the female audience would be bigger? ”

Caption:

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

Another **aspect of representation may be the availability of women's merchandise**, illustrated in Figure 25. When asked whether the presence of such merchandise impacts their sense of representation, respondents' opinions varied across the provided options. The most common response, selected by 32,7% (66) of participants, was that the availability of women's merchandise does not influence their sense of representation. Additionally, 24,8% (50) of respondents indicated that they feel represented by the merchandise, while 23,3% (47) stated that the presence of women's merchandise alone is insufficient for a sense of representation. Furthermore, 12,4% (25) reported feeling more represented when women's merchandise is available, and 6,9% (14) asserted that the merchandise does not contribute to their sense of representation at all.

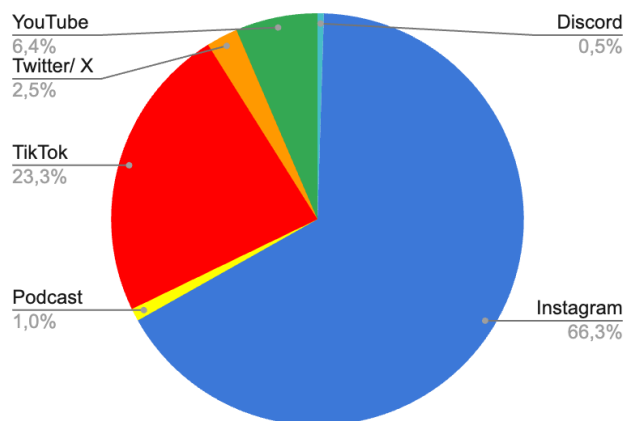
Figure 25 – Representation of women’s merchandising



Source: Google Forms results from the survey elaborated by the author to the question “**Do you feel more represented when you see that there are women merchandising available?**”

The final section of the survey addresses the **attraction to Formula 1 and the engagement of the female Formula 1 fan community online**. Of the 202 respondents, all reported encountering content created by female Formula 1 fans on social media. The subsequent question inquired about **which social media platform was most frequently used** to view this content. The results indicated that Instagram was the leading platform, 66,3% (134), followed by TikTok, 23,3% (47), YouTube with 6% (13), Twitter/X, 2,5% (5), Podcasts, 1% (2), and Discord with 0,5% (1). All this is illustrated in Figure 26.

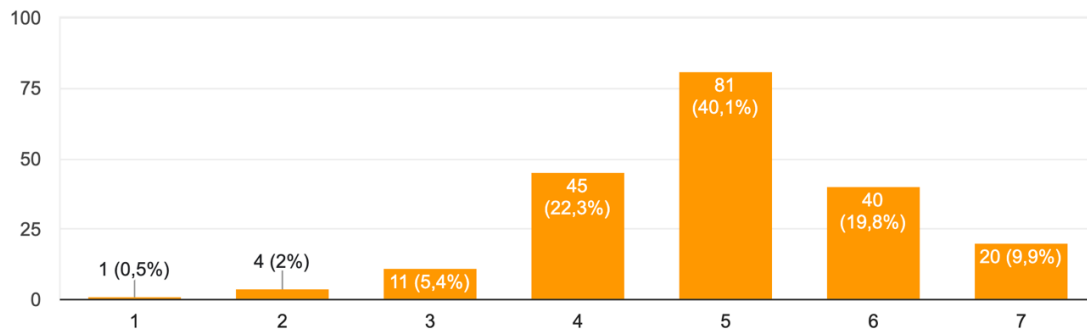
Figure 26 – Social media channels more used to consume Formula 1 related content



Source: Google Forms results from the survey elaborated by the author to the question “**What social media channel do you consume more of this type of content?**”

When asked about their **identification with the content observed** (Figure 27), a majority of respondents expressed a strong sense of connection, with 40,1% (81) indicating they identified frequently, 19,8% (40) very frequently, and 9,9% (20) always.

Figure 27 – Identification with the content seen



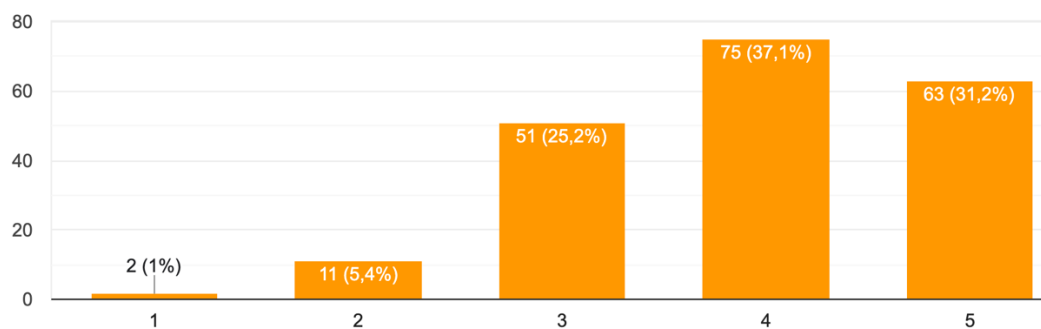
Source: Google Forms results from the survey elaborated by the author to the question “**I identify with the content that I saw:**”

Caption:

1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Occasionally
4. Sometimes
5. Frequently
6. Very frequently
7. Always

When respondents were asked whether the **content they encountered enhanced their comfort within the Formula 1 fan community** (Figure 28), a majority concurred, with 37,1% (75) agreeing and 31,2% (63) strongly agreeing.

Figure 28 – Enhanced comfort within the Formula 1 fan community



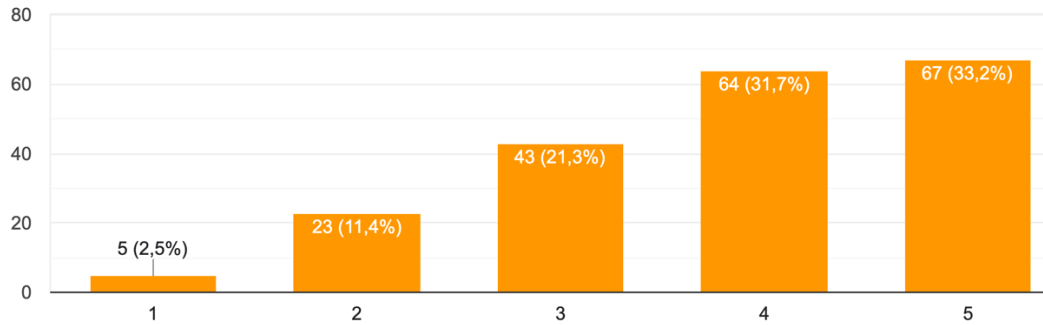
Source: Google Forms results from the survey elaborated by the author to the question “**That content I saw made me feel more comfortable with the Formula 1 fan community:**”

Caption:

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

Regarding their **attraction to the Formula 1 fan community** (Figure 29), the content also contributed positively; 33,2% (67) of respondents strongly agreed, and 31,7% (64) agreed that the content increased their attraction to the community.

Figure 29 – Level of attraction influenced by the content seen



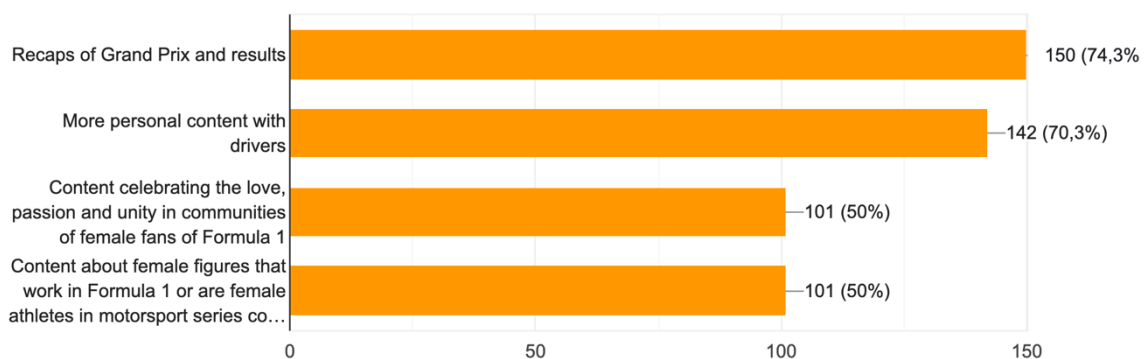
Source: Google Forms results from the survey elaborated by the author to the question “**That content made me feel more attracted to the Formula 1 fan community:**”

Caption:

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

Given the importance of **understanding the types of content most frequently encountered**, the survey included a question with various response options. Most respondents indicated that they were most engaged with recaps of Grand Prix events and the corresponding results, as well as personal content involving the drivers, as illustrated in Figure 30.

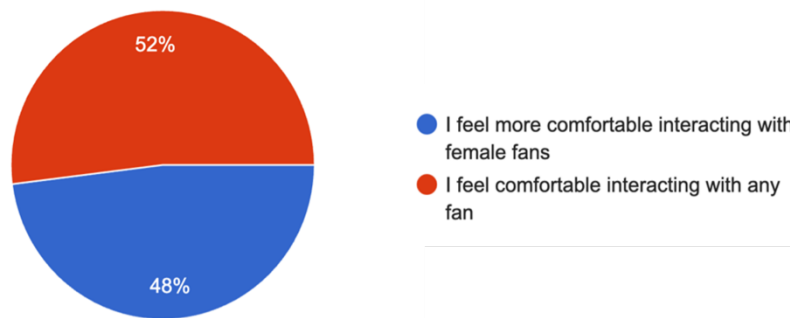
Figure 30 – Type of content do the respondents see more online (Selected all that applied)



Source: Google Forms results from the survey elaborated by the author to the question “**What type of content do you see more? (Select all that apply)**”

The subsequent question addressed **whether female fans felt more comfortable interacting with other female fans or with fans more broadly**. The responses were notably divided: 52% (105) of the respondents reported feeling comfortable interacting with any fans, while 48% (97) indicated a greater comfort level when engaging with other female fans. The distribution of responses is visually represented in Figure 31.

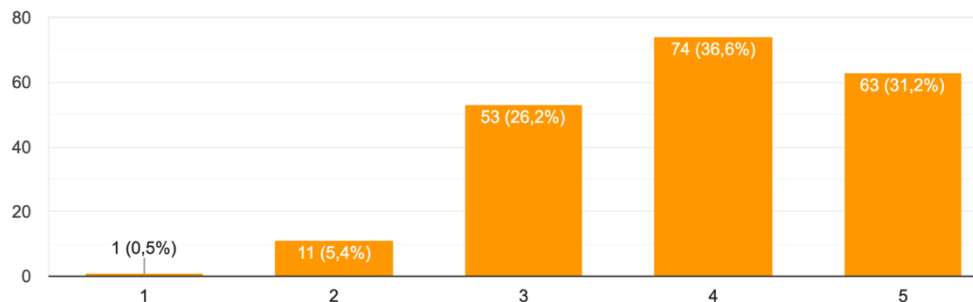
Figure 31 – Number of correspondents that feel more comfortable interacting with female fans or with any fans



Source: Google Forms results from the survey elaborated by the author to the question “**Do you feel more comfortable interacting with female fans or with any fans?**”

The final question addressed **whether respondents concurred with the assertion that the increased emphasis on drivers, often regarded as the "soul of the sport," enhances Formula 1's appeal to fans**. The results indicate that a majority of respondents supported this view, with 36,6% (74) expressing agreement and an additional 31,2% (63) strongly agreeing with the statement. This is demonstrated in Figure 32 below.

Figure 32 – Focus on the drivers and the attraction of more female audience to Formula 1



Source: Google Forms results from the survey elaborated by the author to the question “**The greater focus on drivers (as the soul of the sport) makes Formula 1 more attractive to fans:**”

Caption:

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree

3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

5.2 – Results Discussion

The present study examines the relationship between the online content and engagement generated by female Formula 1 fans and its influence on attracting a broader female audience to the sport and its fan community. To explore this relationship, a comprehensive three-phase research approach was developed. The first phase involved conducting interviews, followed by an ethnographic phase comprising online observations and concluding with a survey phase. Collectively, these three phases enabled a thorough exploration and understanding of the existing connection between the online content and engagement created by female Formula 1 fans and their impact on attracting a larger female audience. Through this multi-methods approach, the study comprehensively addresses and elucidates the research objectives, thereby establishing a clear connection with the findings of the previous literature review. The subsequent discussion will focus on interpreting the results in light of the previously stated research objectives. It is important to note that the second and third objectives of this study will be addressed concurrently in the second subsection of this discussion.

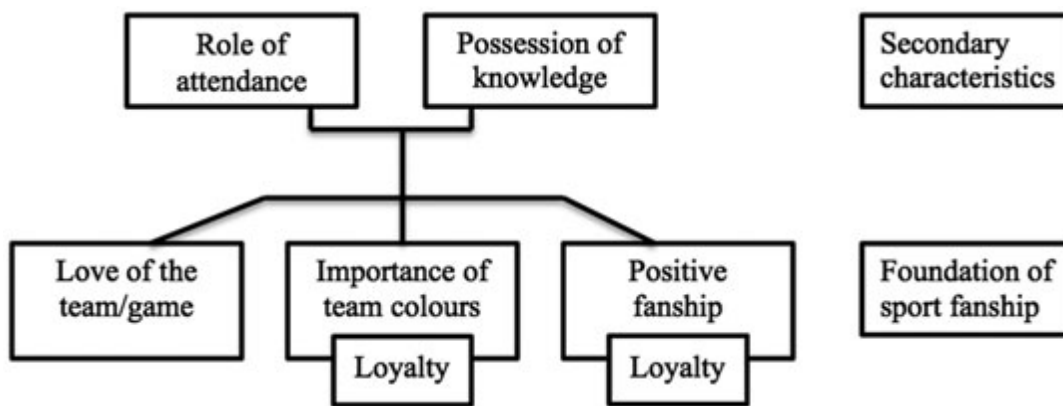
5.2.1 – The factors that initially captivate female Formula 1 enthusiasts towards the sport and the distinctive characteristics that typify this demographic

Regarding the first objective, to understand what characteristics a female Formula 1 fan needs to have to be considered a true fan and some of the main factors that attracted females to the sport, they were explored throughout the interviews (Appendix B) using questions based on the literature (Sveinson & Hoeber, 2015; Motorsport Network et al., 2021; Pope, 2017; Liston, 2006; Toffoletti, 2017).

Sveinson and Hoeber (2015) provide a detailed framework outlining a hierarchy of characteristics associated with female sports fans based on the findings of their study. The primary foundation of sports fandom, according to their research, is composed of three key attributes: a deep passion for the game or team, the significance of wearing team colours, and the demonstration of positive fan behaviours. In addition to these

foundational traits, the study identifies secondary characteristics, which include the role of game attendance and the possession of substantial knowledge about the sport. A detailed illustration of these findings is provided in Figure 33.

Figure 33 – The Hierarchy of Female Sport Fan Characteristics



Source: Sveinson & Hoeber (2015)

According to the interview findings, several aspects align with the research conducted by Sveinson and Hoeber (2015). However, there are notable deviations when establishing a hierarchy of characteristics among female Formula 1 fans. The secondary characteristics experience slight adjustments, as the role of attendance and possession of knowledge continue to hold their previous positions. Notably, the importance of team colours has transitioned from the foundational level to the secondary level, representing a departure from the prior conclusions of Sveinson and Hoeber (2015). The foundational aspects of sports fanship are expanded within the context of Formula 1, transitioning from three characteristics to five. While the positive fanship component retains its original classification, the concept of love for the team or game has evolved to encompass love, passion, and enjoyment for the sport in its entirety. This is supplemented by the significance of feeling represented or included within the sport, the entertainment and enjoyment derived from engaging with the sport, and the importance placed on supporting a team or athlete. This establishes a novel hierarchy specifically designed for and by female Formula 1 enthusiasts, particularly within the context under consideration.

Concerning the remaining authors (Pope, 2017; Liston, 2006; Toffoletti, 2017) who have explored the potential reasons for female fans' attraction to sports, they challenge the notion that women's interest in sports is primarily driven by the sexualization of athletes. Instead, these scholars argue that female sports fans are drawn to the sport for

reasons beyond this reductionist view. These authors contend that the reasons for female fans' attraction to sports should be examined within the context of the female fan community. They also emphasize that the focus on athletes may stem from the notion that familiarity with the athletes can render the sport more relatable and accessible, thereby fostering a stronger connection between the fans and the sport.

Regarding the origins of their attraction to Formula 1, most interviewees indicated that it stemmed from family influences, such as having relatives who regularly watched the sport, which led them to do the same. Others mentioned a connection to locations associated with racing, such as living near a racetrack or karting facility. These responses align with findings from various authors (Liston, 2006; Pope, 2017; Toffoletti, 2017), who identify family influence as a primary factor in developing an interest in the sport. In alignment with the authors' findings, the portrayal of drivers as the "soul" of the sport is evident, particularly through their presence on social media. By showcasing a different, more personal side of themselves, the drivers enhance fans' sense of familiarity and closeness not only to the drivers but also to the teams and the sport as a whole. These responses corroborate the authors' assertions about the factors driving female sports fans' attraction, particularly within the context of Formula 1. The findings further support the notion that female fans tend to focus more on drivers, validating the authors' perspectives on this aspect.

These findings suggest that the factors initially attracting female Formula 1 fans align with those previously identified in the literature. However, in delineating the distinctive characteristics of female Formula 1 fans, it became necessary to modify the framework proposed by Sveinson and Hoeber (2015) in Figure 33. These adaptations were made to better reflect the context of the present study, specifically focusing on the female Formula 1 fandom.

5.2.2 – The nature of fan-generated content produced by female fans, the intricacies of their communal interactions within online platforms, and the engagement fostered by female Formula 1 enthusiasts

The netnography phase was essential to understanding how engagement is cultivated concerning the content produced by female fans and disseminated within female communities. As previously discussed, the observation process was structured according to the theoretical framework outlined in Table 4, which was informed by

various authors' proposals and findings (Stavros et al., 2014; Chan & Li, 2010; Reinharz, 1992; Putnam, 2000; Baccarella, Wagner et al., 2018; Chiu & Leng, 2021; Ioakmidis, 2010); Hatch & Schultz, 2010; Santos et al., 2019).

Given that the observation encompassed two Instagram profiles and one YouTube profile, variations in the types of content analysed were evident (Chan & Li, 2010). The YouTube profile primarily featured longer-form content, either in video or audio format, which contrasted with the shorter content typically found on Instagram. Consequently, the YouTube profile garnered fewer comments and likes compared to the Instagram profiles. Additionally, the tone of the content—whether informal, informative, or humorous—did not significantly impact the level of engagement among female fans (Stavros et al., 2014).

As argued by Reinharz (1992), Putnam (2000), and Baccarella, Wagner, Kietzmann, and McCarthy (2018), the reasons female fans express themselves within these communities are closely linked to the persistent separation between female and male fandoms in real life. Within these female-centred communities, fans find a sense of comfort and unity in their interactions, which may not be as prevalent in the broader, mixed-gender fandom. This sense of belonging is particularly strong due to the significant number of women expressing feelings of pride and happiness regarding female achievements or perceiving the female fandom as a more private and supportive group. In comparison to content and interactions outside of these communities, notable differences were observed, aligning with findings by Chiu and Leng (2021) and Reinharz (1992). Within female fan communities, the content consistently exhibited a positive tone and a more personal touch, often involving direct, first-person communication with followers. Additionally, there was a significant emphasis on content related to female athletes and workers within the sport, highlighting their achievements. This distinct focus and personalised engagement contribute to the unique environment within these female-centred spaces. Despite the advancements in social media communication by Formula 1 and its teams in recent years, noticeable differences in interactions among female fans persist. The content produced by official social media channels is generally targeted at the broader fandom, lacking specific communication tailored to particular subgroups. This broad approach results in a communication gap, as noted by Ioakimidis (2010), Hatch and Schultz (2010), and Santos, Correia, Biscaia, and Pegoraro (2019). This gap underscores the need for more nuanced and inclusive engagement strategies to address the fanbase's diverse needs and preferences.

To comprehend the mechanisms behind online engagement, it was crucial to investigate what content resonates most with female fans within this digital environment. This analysis required a thorough examination of the types of content that draw significant attention and engagement, alongside identifying thematic variations across different social media platforms and communities. Understanding these distinctions provided valuable insights into the specific elements that foster stronger connections and interactions among female Formula 1 fans. Regarding social media channels, Instagram emerged as more popular than YouTube among female Formula 1 fans, particularly due to its short-form content, including videos and images. More personal content, especially when it involves or focuses on the drivers, garnered the highest levels of interaction among female fans. This was followed by content that celebrates female representation across various motorsport series. These findings suggest that female fans tend to cultivate a more personal connection with Formula 1, favouring content that reflects and deepens this relationship. This preference facilitates more personal interactions within the fan community and provides a platform for expressing their passion for the sport, aligning with the perspectives discussed by scholars such as Reinharz (1992), Santos, Correia, Biscaia, and Pegoraro (2019), and Chan and Li (2010).

The most popular genre of content among female Formula 1 fans is characterized by its humorous and informal nature. This type of content fosters a sense of comfort, allowing female fans to express their passion for the sport in a relaxed and enjoyable manner. It also positions Formula 1 as a source of entertainment and a reprieve from the demands of everyday life, creating a media space where women feel included and unburdened by the pressures of taking the sport too seriously. This environment contrasts with the broader sports context, where female fans often face offensive or unpleasant remarks from male counterparts. The preference for this genre underscores the desire for a supportive and inclusive community (Reinharz, 1992; Santos et al., 2019; Chan & Li, 2010).

Understanding the various types of fan-generated content within the female Formula 1 fandom and the ways in which female fans interact with and create engagement around this content is crucial for effectively reaching this demographic. To foster deeper engagement and attract a broader female audience, it is essential to address the specific needs of female fans by creating a space that feels more personal and inclusive. The interviews conducted in this study revealed that female fans consistently express a strong aversion to negative and offensive comments, particularly those targeting them for being

female fans or for their choice of drivers or teams. These negative interactions are predominantly encountered with male fans. By establishing a safe and supportive community, or by implementing appropriate measures within the sport, it becomes possible to cultivate a sense of belonging among female fans, allowing them to feel as integrated into the Formula 1 community as their male counterparts have traditionally felt.

5.2.3 – The elements influencing the attraction of new female fans and female audiences to the sport.

The survey was disseminated via social media platforms to determine whether the factors influencing female Formula 1 fans align with those affecting the broader female audience of Formula 1. This approach aimed to gather a wider range of perspectives from fans across different regions, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the factors at play.

Pope (2017), Liston (2006), and Toffoletti (2017) emphasize that family influence, particularly the impact of a male figure, typically the father, is a significant factor in fostering female interest in sports. This finding is corroborated in the present study, where the primary reason cited by respondents for their initial interest in Formula 1 was the influence of family. Given that the majority of female respondents were relatively young, the media's role in attracting them to the sport is substantial. The second most frequently cited reason for initial interest in Formula 1 was the sport's presence across various media platforms, including social media channels and the popular Netflix series *Drive to Survive*, which debuted in 2019. This media exposure has significantly contributed to their engagement with the sport.

The presence of women in Formula 1, traditionally perceived as a male-dominated sphere, has seen notable growth in recent years. Despite this progress, female representation remains significantly limited when compared to their male counterparts. The female fandom is cognizant of the limited representation of women in Formula 1, yet the sport itself may not fully recognise the potential impact this underrepresentation can have on its fan base.

According to the survey results, the majority of female respondents indicated that they admire a female personality within the Formula 1 community. Notable figures

include Susie Wolff, a former Formula 1 driver and current managing director of F1 Academy, as well as F1 Academy drivers and key personnel such as Hannah Schmitz, an engineer strategist for Red Bull Racing. Additionally, content creators like Lissie Mackintosh and journalists such as Natalie Pinkham, a British pit lane reporter for Sky Sports F1, were also frequently mentioned. Even though this could signify a good representation of the sport, with good visibility in the media channels, it is not what the female fandom feels. Most of the female fans feel that the representation is very low, and there is room and possibility to have even more female representation. As Saraiva, Ferreira and Silveirinha (2019) argued, female representation in the media has been and still continues to be insufficient and very reduced when compared to their male counterparts. This demonstrates a significant oversight in the representation of female figures in sports, an issue that requires comprehensive efforts to address through enhanced media visibility. While the primary Formula 1 championship is widely broadcast across various major media platforms, both paid and free, the F1 Academy—a championship exclusively featuring female drivers—remains confined to YouTube, with no coverage on mainstream media outlets. This limited exposure perpetuates the marginalization of female athletes, as evidenced by the lack of references to the F1 Academy in discussions surrounding Formula 1, where other competitions such as Formula 2 or Formula 3 are more frequently mentioned. This disparity highlights the need for a more inclusive approach in media representation to elevate the profile of female athletes in motorsports.

The significance of female representation in Formula 1 extends beyond its current impact on the existing fan base, as it holds potential implications for the sport's future audience as well. A study by More than Equal (2023) revealed that female fans believe the female audience for Formula 1 could expand significantly if there were more female athletes participating in the sport. This is a critical factor in attracting a broader audience, as the present study's survey also confirmed that many female respondents believe that increasing female representation within Formula 1 would lead to substantial audience growth. This underscores the crucial role of female representation in drawing a larger female demographic to the sport. While teams have begun to make incremental efforts, such as introducing merchandise specifically targeting women, these efforts are insufficient and have had a limited impact on the female audience and fans.

As previously discussed, social media serves as the primary medium for female fans, making it the central source of attraction and engagement for the global Formula 1

fandom. Instagram, in particular, is the most widely used platform, offering a versatile space for consuming various types of content, including images and short videos. Antunovic and Hardin (2012) argued that online female-generated content could make women feel more comfortable expressing their fandom and increase their attraction to the community. This heightened level of engagement has the potential to disseminate feminist discourse across social media platforms, thereby reaching and resonating with a broader female audience who may be drawn to the sport. The findings of the present study align with the conclusions drawn by previous authors. Within the context of Formula 1, female fans and audiences report that they strongly identify with the content encountered online, which enhances their sense of comfort within the broader Formula 1 fan community and increases their attraction to the sport. Consequently, this type of content not only serves as a valuable source of engagement but also represents a significant resource that the sport and its teams can leverage to attract a larger female audience.

To effectively engage the female audience, it is crucial to tailor content that resonates with their interests and preferences. Drawing on various content strategies proposed by several researchers (Chan & Li, 2010; Santos et al., 2019; Stavros et al., 2014; Reinhartz, 1992), this study adapted these frameworks to the Formula 1 context. Through the netnography phase, it was identified that content types most appealing to the female audience include Grand Prix recapitulations—such as highlights of key moments throughout the weekend—and more personal, informal content featuring drivers. This finding further demonstrates that female supporters are inclined towards establishing a social and personal connection with the sport while simultaneously maintaining a comparable level of interest in its technical and competitive aspects, similar to their male counterparts. This is further reinforced by the participants' consensus that portraying the drivers as the soul and human element of the sport enhances Formula 1's appeal to female fans and audiences at large. The connection between the sport and the social dimension of life is thus affirmed as a significant factor in female attraction and fandom practices.

Although the findings of these studies predominantly indicate that female fans and audiences feel more comfortable within female communities and frequently consume content produced by other females, one notable finding diverged from this trend. The female audience and fans are generally comfortable interacting with both female and male fans in similar ways. Despite reports, particularly on social media, of uncomfortable experiences with male supporters, the female segment of the fandom does not exhibit discomfort when engaging with male fans, approaching interactions with both genders

similarly. This observation may appear dissonant with the framework suggesting that women gravitate towards female-only communities to avoid undesirable situations. However, the content produced by female fans and the incremental steps Formula 1 and its teams are taking toward inclusion and equality may be empowering female fans to feel a stronger sense of belonging within the sport. This, in turn, contributes significantly to the overall attraction of the Formula 1 fandom.

In conclusion, the factors that attract female fans and audiences to Formula 1 are diverse but consistently rooted in social and emotional dimensions. Social media platforms serve as the primary medium through which fans consume content, making these channels the main avenue of communication between the sport, its participants, and the fandom. Formula 1 and its teams have increasingly leveraged social media, with a greater emphasis on driver involvement in communication and marketing strategies. This approach has successfully attracted more female fans, not through the sexualization of drivers but by revealing a more human and personal aspect of the sport, fostering a stronger connection between teams and their supporters. The findings discussed in this section highlight that the most significant factor of attraction is the emotional and personal connection, both among female fans and between these fans and the sport itself. This connection is reinforced through content created by other female fans, who are more attuned to the sentiments and experiences of their female counterparts. Such content also provides a sense of representation for women in a sport traditionally dominated by men. Therefore, it is crucial to focus on creating and distributing content that resonates with female fans, as this can enhance engagement on social media. The higher the level of engagement, the greater the attraction to the sport, thereby expanding the female fan base in Formula 1.

Chapter 6 – Contributions

The present study was guided by the research question: "*How does the fan engagement built by the audience of female Formula 1 fans on social networks influence the attraction of female audiences in Formula 1 fandom?*". To address this question, specific objectives were established, allowing the study to be segmented into manageable parts to achieve the necessary conclusions. As detailed in the discussion of results, all study objectives were successfully addressed. These findings have been important in understanding how the engagement generated by female fans through social media

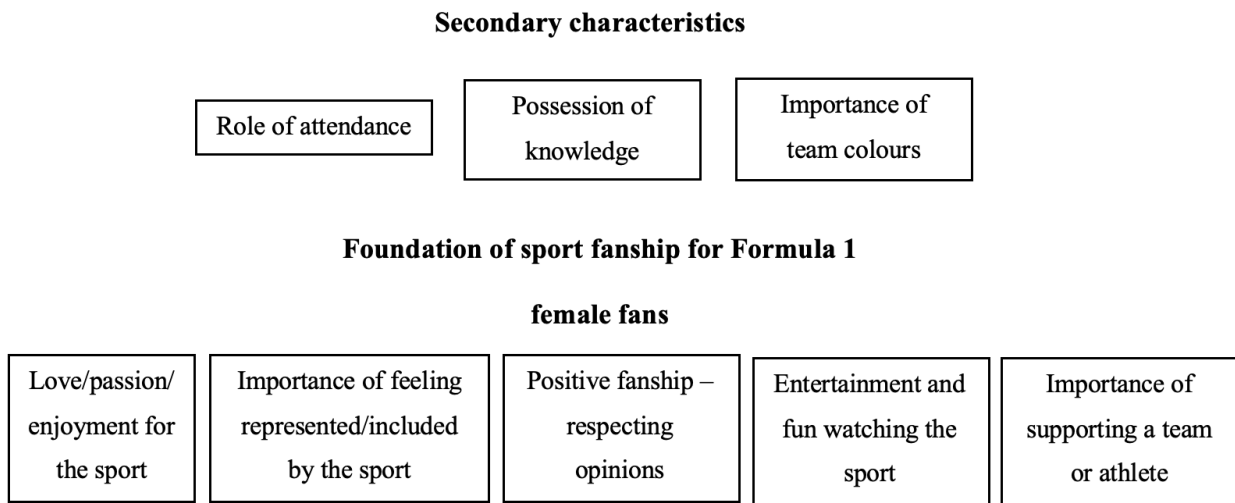
interactions influences the attraction of new female audiences to the sport. The content these fans share contributes significantly to the social dimension of the sport, fostering a sense of belonging and offering many fans an escape from daily life.

The main barrier these fans might encounter is the fact that there are still a lot of stigmas surrounding the fact that Formula 1 is a sport for everyone who shares a passion for it and not just a male-orientated sport. In this context, the content created by female fans plays a pivotal role in challenging and dismantling this stigma. By focusing on personal and emotionally resonant themes, while still engaging with the core elements of sports fandom, female fans are helping to redefine the perception of Formula 1 as an inclusive and welcoming space for all enthusiasts.

6.1 – Academic Contributions

As for academic contributions, this study's findings suggest the reformulation of the hierarchy of female sports fan characteristics, initially proposed by Sveinson and Hoeber (2015) in their pioneering study of female sports fans. While Sveinson and Hoeber's work marked a significant advancement in understanding the characteristics of female sports fans, their research was limited to a narrow and specific context. To assess the broader applicability of their hierarchy, it was essential to explore its relevance in diverse fandoms, such as Formula 1. One of the key findings of the present study is that female Formula 1 fans prioritize different aspects compared to those outlined in the original hierarchy as shown in the results discussion of this study, necessitating a reformulation. This reformulation has been crucial in gaining a deeper understanding of the mindset of female Formula 1 fans and how their perspectives influence the content they create and share on social media. By adapting the hierarchy to fit this context, the study has provided valuable insights into the unique characteristics and preferences of female Formula 1 fans, which in turn shape their social media engagement and contributions to the broader fandom. This hierarchical reformulated framework is illustrated in Figure 34.

Figure 34 - The Hierarchy of Female Formula 1 Fan Characteristics (Reformulated)



Source: Author's elaboration based on interview results

Understanding the characteristics of female Formula 1 fans, the content they create, the engagement it generates, and how these factors influence their attraction to the sport leads to important conclusions regarding online engagement and audience dynamics. The engagement created online is significantly shaped by how female fans perceive themselves as part of the fandom and their views on the characteristics that define a "true" fan. This perception directly impacts the type of content they produce, which often reflects a more personal and emotional connection to the sport. Female Formula 1 fans tend to emphasize personal relationships with the sport, and this is evident in the content they create. The most popular and engaging content often revolves around personal moments with drivers or expressions of emotional connection to teams and the sport itself. This type of content resonates strongly with other fans and the broader female audience, fostering a sense of identification and belonging within the Formula 1 community. The study's findings reveal that this content not only makes female fans feel more comfortable within the community but also enhances their attraction to Formula 1. This study's results also highlight a perceived lack of representation within the sport, which could potentially hinder the growth of Formula 1's appeal to female audiences. Despite concerted efforts to enhance female representation—such as the establishment of the F1 Academy and the increasing visibility of female journalists and commentators—these measures are not deemed sufficient by the female fanbase.

6.2 – Industry Contributions

The study suggests that Formula 1 should implement more comprehensive strategies to increase the presence of women within its workforce, thereby creating additional role models for aspiring female fans. Moreover, the desire for a female driver to compete alongside male drivers is particularly notable. This aspiration reflects the fans' broader interest in seeing more tangible forms of gender equality within the sport. The inclusion of a female driver at the highest level of competition would likely be met with enthusiasm and could serve as a powerful symbol of progress, further enhancing the sport's attractiveness to female audiences. Therefore, Formula 1's efforts to diversify its representation should extend beyond current initiatives, embracing more ambitious goals that resonate with the expectations of its growing female fanbase.

To conclude, these insights underscore the relationship between online engagement by female fans and the attraction of more female audiences to the sport, effectively addressing the research question. The emotional and personal nature of the content created by female fans plays a crucial role in expanding the female fanbase, as it aligns with their desire for a more inclusive and relatable fan experience. These findings suggest that Formula 1 should broaden its online content strategy to better align with this segment of the fan base. Expanding representation by incorporating more female content creators could serve as a significant step towards establishing role models for female fans, demonstrating that their passion for the sport is something to take pride in. Such representation would reinforce a sense of belonging within the fandom and actively challenge the historically male-dominated perception of the sport, thereby fostering a more inclusive environment for female supporters.

6.3 – Limitations and Future Research Suggestions

This research is focused on the female fandom of Formula 1 and the female audience of the sport. Even though the participants were from various nationalities and countries and had quite a wide range of ages, there were still many more participants between the ages of 18 and 24, with the predominant nationalities being British and American. This could influence the results since this age and nationalities are also the ones where the sport's popularity is higher. This also affects the generalisation of the results since Formula 1 has a worldwide fandom. Because of this, it would be very useful

to have more representation with a greater equilibrium between the age ranges and the variety of nationalities.

It is also important to note that not much research has been done on female fans in a sports context with the reach that Formula 1 has. Since not much knowledge was created in this context, the aspects studied in this research were very specific towards certain categories. It would be interesting to study more aspects of the female fandom in Formula 1 in the future, for example, to dive more into the question of representation addressed briefly here or the difference in feeling towards the sport among different age categories, since it was not possible to do this in the present study due to time limitations and access to more participants throughout the world.

It would also be interesting to study the perspective of representation from the female perspective in the context, with the possibility of contacting female personalities who work in Formula 1 or other motorsport categories.

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Appendixes

Appendix A – Interview Script

Hello,

I would like to express my gratitude for your participation in this interview. Your contribution is greatly appreciated and very valuable to my research. Thank you once again for your time and cooperation. As I informed you before I am writing my master dissertation about the attraction of female Formula 1 fans and the engagement that exists in the female fandom of Formula 1.

Part 1 – Characteristics female Formula 1 fans consider to be what a true fan should have

- What characteristics do you feel a fan of Formula 1 needs to have?
- How important is it for you to be passionate about the sport to be a Formula 1 fan?
- Do you think it is important to wear the team's colours?
 - To show support or loyalty?
 - And does it make a difference whether it is official merchandising or not?
 - How important do you think that having special women merchandising is?
- To be a Formula 1 fan is it more valuable to support Formula 1 as a sport or to support one of the teams or one of the drivers?
 - Why?
- And concerning the story of Formula 1, is it important to know it to be a fan?
- Do you have fun supporting a team or driver and watching Formula 1?
 - What part do you like most about it?
- How important do you think it is to have a certain frequency in attending Grands Prix?

- And in relation to the behaviour that fans have, if someone has negative behaviour, do you consider that to be a fan?

- Why?

Part 2 – Understand what attracted fans to Formula 1

- Since when have you followed Formula 1?
- What most attracted you to Formula 1?
- How did the attraction to Formula 1 come about?
- Do you think a greater focus on drivers (as the soul of the sport) makes Formula 1 more attractive to fans?

- Why?

- Can you explain?

Appendix B – Survey Script and Informed Consent

Title: The attraction of female fans and the engagement of the female fandom of Formula 1

Welcome!

The current study is part of a research project to obtain a Master's degree in Communication Sciences from the Universidade Católica Portuguesa. It aims to understand the connection between attracting more female fans and audiences in Formula 1 and the engagement created by female Formula 1 fans in social media environments, along with the female representation that Formula 1 has.

Your contribution is highly valued and expected to take approximately 5 minutes. It guarantees complete anonymity and confidentiality, with the data collected solely designated for academic purposes within this study.

If you have any inquiries, feel free to contact Marina Correia Lopes, the student overseeing this research, at the provided email address: s-marcorlopes@ucp.pt.

Thank you very much for your assistance and willingness to participate!

Do you wish to continue and answer the survey?

- Yes
 No

Section 1 – sample characterisation

What's your age?

Which one do you identify with?

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say
- Other _____

Nationality:

Country of residence:

Occupation:

- Student
- Full-time worker
- Part-time worker
- Unemployed

Section 2 – understand what attracted the female audience to Formula 1

Since when did you follow Formula 1?

What initially sparked the interest in Formula 1? (Select all that apply)

- Family influence
- Through media channels (social media, Netflix’s *Drive to Survive*, etc.)
- Through my friends
- Other _____

Do you think it is important to be passionate about Formula 1?

Not important at all	Not important	It doesn’t make a difference	It’s important	It’s very important
1	2	3	4	5

Have you ever attended a Formula 1 Grand Prix?

- Yes (if yes, how many? _____)
- No

Are you a fan of a specific team/driver?

- Yes, I'm a fan of a specific driver
- Yes, I'm a fan of a specific team
- I like different teams and drivers
- I don't support a specific driver or team

Are you a fan of Formula 1 in general?

- Yes, I'm a fan of Formula 1 in general
- Yes, I enjoy the sport in general
- I just like the sport, but I also like the teams and drivers
- No, I'm more fan of a specific driver
- No, I'm more fan of a specific team

Section 3 – role models and representation in the media

Do you admire any female Formula 1 personalities?

- Yes (if yes, which one? _____)
- No

How do you feel about the representation in the media of the females who work in Formula 1?

They don't have representation at all	They have very low representation	They could have more representation	The representation of females is enough	There is a very good representation
1	2	3	4	5

Do you think that if there were more female representation in Formula 1, the female audience would be bigger?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

Do you feel more represented when you see that there are women merchandising available?

- I don't feel represented at all
- I feel that representation in merchandising isn't enough
- It makes no difference to me
- I feel represented
- I feel much more represented

Section 4 – attraction to Formula 1 and female fans engagement

Have you come across content on social media made by female Formula 1 fans?

- Yes
- No

What social media channel do you consume more of this type of content?

- Instagram
- YouTube
- Other: _____

I identify with the content that I saw:

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently	Very frequently	Always
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The content I saw made me feel more comfortable with the Formula 1 fan community:

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

That content made me feel more attracted to the Formula 1 fan community:

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

What type of content do you see more? (Select all that apply)

- Recaps of Grand Prix and results
- More personal content with drivers
- Content celebrating the love, passion and unity in communities of female fans of Formula 1
- Content about female figures that work in Formula 1 or are female athletes in motorsport series connected to Formula 1 (e.g. F1 Academy)

Do you feel more comfortable interacting with female fans or with any fans?

- I feel more comfortable interacting with female fans
- I feel comfortable interacting with any fan

The greater focus on drivers (as the soul of the sport) makes Formula 1 more attractive to fans:

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

Thank you so much for your help and collaboration!

Appendix C – Informed Consent for Interviews

Informed Consent

Title of the study: Female fan engagement and female audience attraction in Formula 1

Researcher:

Marina Correia Lopes

Master of Communication Sciences: Marketing, Advertising and Communication

Universidade Católica Portuguesa

s-marcorlopes@ucp.pt

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to understand the relationship between the fan engagement created online on social media by female Formula 1 fans and the attraction of more fans and new female audiences to Formula 1. Before deciding to take part in this study, you must comprehend the purpose of the research and its requirements. If you have questions at any time about this study, you may contact the researcher whose contact information is provided above.

Study procedures

You will be asked questions about the characteristics and behaviours of what makes a Formula 1 female and also about the attraction to Formula 1 as a sport. The interview should last a maximum of 20 minutes. The interview will be audio-recorded by the researcher and then re-transcribed in a text version for the researcher to analyse the data.

Confidentiality

Your comments in this research study will remain anonymous. The researcher will be the sole individual handling the collected data.

Voluntary Participation

Your involvement in this study is entirely voluntary. The decision to participate rests solely with you. Should you choose to take part, you will be requested to provide consent by signing a form. You retain the freedom to withdraw from the study at any point without justifying. Withdrawal from the study will have no bearing on any relationship you may have with the researcher. If you opt to withdraw before the completion of data collection, your data will either be returned to you or securely disposed of.

Consent

I have reviewed and comprehended the provided details and have had the chance to seek clarification where needed. I acknowledge that my involvement is voluntary, and I have the liberty to withdraw at any point, without obligation or explanation. I am aware that I will receive a copy of this consent form. I willingly consent to participate in this study.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Research's signature _____ Date _____

Appendix D – Code Book: List of codes for thematic analysis in the interviews

- **Question?**

Sveison & Hoeber (2015)

Foundation of sport fandom for female fans of Formula 1

- Love/passion/enjoyment for the team/sport
- Importance of team colours (merchandising)

Factors influencing their opinion on merchandising:

- Other people's reaction
- Price
- Representation
- Positive fandom
- Entertainment/fun

Secondary characteristics of female fans of Formula 1

- Role of attendance
- Possession of knowledge

Motorsport Network, Formula 1 & Nielsen (2021)

- Importance of sport vs. athlete/team

Pope (2017); Liston (2006); Toffoletti (2017)

- Factors of attraction of Formula 1 female fans
- Focus on the drivers as the soul and human side of the sport

Appendix E – Transcription of interview of female 1

- Thank you so much for accepting to be interviewed by me. So, we're going to start with the first part, that it's a bit a little bit about characteristics of female Formula One fans and what they need to have to be considered true fan. So, the starting with the base question is, **what characteristics do you feel a fan of Formula One needs to have?**
- **OK.**
Passion for motor sports. Let me think... time available to watch the race. I don't know what's considered to be a true fan honestly. **I mean to be a true fan; you just need to enjoy something.** You don't need to know all the history and all of that. So, in my opinion, to be a fan, you just need to enjoy it and feel like you are part of something. And be feel like you're connected with that thing in specific. So yeah, that's my answer.
- OK, great. And you actually talked in the beginning of your answer about like the passion to be passion about Motorsports in this case and **how important is it for you like to be passionate about?** The sport, in this case of Formula One actually to really be a fan.
- **It's just like what I said you have to be passion in order to be a fan of something. I think you need to feel like you belong to that.** You need to connect with the people that also enjoy it. The people who are also passionate about it and for me to be passionate about it, it's in my personal case it's because I am a fan of Formula One and Motorsports for a long time, I have been a fan for a long time. So, it becomes part of myself. It's like it's something that everyone around me knows that I like and that's why I'm passionate about it, because I have been it. It has been part of my life for a long time and that's it.
- OK, great. And one thing that came up during my research was about like wearing the team colours. **Do you think it is important to wear the team colours?**
- **I don't think so. I understand why it is important to a lot of people, but talking about my first answer, when you are a fan of motorsport, you're a fan of the sport in general. Of course, there are a lot of people that like just cheer for one**

team or one racer in specific. Of course, I have my favourites, just like I believe everyone else has, but in my opinion, it's important to wear the team colours in some way, but it's not fundamental of course.

- **It might be maybe important to a lot of people, but when you like the sports in general, you will be happy wearing all colours.** I guess it depends on the racers and the teams, but I believe the history of the sport is also very important because there are like two or three teams that a lot of people enjoy because it's that team and not the racer and they don't care about the outcome or the results, they just cheer for that team and I think that it's also a valid perspective of the sport.
- OK, so I think you'd say that you have a pretty similar opinion when it comes to like whether it makes a different wear for instance, **official merchandising or not, right?**
- **Yes. Definitely. You can support and show loyalty the way you want and can of course, because merch is an expensive thing.**
- OK. And for instance, in the last few years, we've seen more Formula One teams launching like special women's items, so we don't have just like men's and unisex items. **Do you think it is important to have special woman merchandising?**
- **Yes, yes, I do believe. I mean, every sport usually has women merchandise and usually it's very different from the unisex or the men, and I'm thinking about soccer, for example, you have a special merchandise for women that it's more pinkish and it's more girly.** And I think that the Formula One world was missing that, and I don't believe that every woman will buy that because a lot of a lot of women still buy the men's clothes because they're identify more or whatever reason. **But I think it is important to uh, have that sort of niche because it feels like we're more represented and we're more there for the sport and they're also doing their launching and doing their merchandise, thinking about every fan, including women. And for example, Alpine had a pink livery for their car but in their merchandising, there was almost no pink at all. I feel like this is to contradict the fact that since they basically sell more men's merch, they might not like to wear pink although it's a colour of their team.**
- OK, yeah, there's a lot of more like choice to make if you want to buy the men's. You can if you want to buy the girls, you can. So yeah, it makes sense. Exactly. And for

instance, in the case of a Formula One, fans, **do you think it is more valuable to support Formula One as a sport? So as a whole or to support, for instance, one of the teams or the drivers?**

- I think it's more common seeing people support teams. I don't know, maybe this may be controversial, but my opinion in what I see, especially in social media, is that men are usually a fan of the sport, and women are usually a fan of a team. Or a racer in specific, and I think that's why a lot of men don't believe that women are true fans. I think men look at women, look at Formula One fans women, thinking that they are only there for a race or only there for a team. And I think that's the biggest difference between the female fans and the male fans.
- OK. Yeah. Makes sense. Yeah, that's very true. And earlier, you actually talked about the story of Formula One and so concerning that part of the sport, **the story of Formula One, do you think it is important to know it to actually be a fan?**
- **No.**
- OK.
- **I think it's important to have a little bit like common knowledge. Everyone will. Everyone should know where, like who the biggest racers or the biggest teams are. But I don't believe that to be a real fan, you have to know how many times that racer won the championship or in what year, in what year that racer has started racing.** I think it's making a comparison. It's like that the in the music world, a lot of people say you need to know all the lyrics of all names, all the albums, to be a fan. And that's not true. You just need to enjoy yourself and enjoy watching and be happy while doing it.
- Exactly. And since you mentioned like the enjoying part and being happy part. **Do you normally have fun sporting a drive or team while watching Formula One?**
- **Yes, of course. If I wasn't happy watching it, I would not watch.**
- Nice. **And what part do you like most about it?**

- **All of it. I get really excited with all of it, like the whole weekend, the whole race weekend.** The qualification is really exciting. The race itself is really exciting. See nowadays we have a lot of pluses that we didn't have back in the days like we can watch behind the scenes online. **We have TikTok's, we have Instagram posts and Instagram videos and all. Even F1 do does a lot of interviews backstage and it's really exciting to see a little bit behind the races. That's really exciting as well.**
- And another thing that came up regarding whether a fan is like a true fan or not was like the frequency of attending live events and in case of Formula One in female fans, **how important would you say that it is to have a certain frequency in attending Grand Prix's?**
- **It doesn't make sense. OK, that's B. That's *****.** It's when you're a fan of something that it's so worldwide. It's so globally present in every country. **90% of the people that enjoy Formula One would not go to a race, probably cannot afford going to a race or cannot afford travelling overseas. It's really expensive and even if it's not expensive, it's something that is happening like two and two weekends. It's really hard to maintain an attendance like 100% attendance is like completely impossible.** It's not like going to see your soccer game in your in your home country or whatever. It's really complicated, and I don't believe that it's completely necessary. You don't need to go to live events to be a real fan or anything like that.
- Perfect. And for instance, you were talking either like even things that we have online. So, either online are there like if you're seeing on TV or surrounded by people, there's also the thing of the behaviour of the fans. **So, if you have someone that is, like, oh, I'm a fan, but then they have like, some kind of negative behaviour. Do you still consider that person to be a fan?**
- **I mean, they may be a fan, but if they're hating on specific racer or a team or whatever, I tend to stop connecting with that people, stop talking with that people. Actually, it happened like in person with family for me because regarding like some controversies in the F1, I had an opinion, and they had a different complete opposite opinion of mine and I tend to just stop talking because it's just opinions. It's a sport and no one will be right or wrong.** It's

complicated, I guess, but they're not. I don't believe them to be like they're not fans because they're mean or they're hater. But, I mean, stop talking.

- Yeah. Yeah. So, you just consider them to be a fan, but you just have kind of like a reaction of they not affecting your experience. So ,you just stop the whole thing.
- **Yeah, I don't think they're affecting my experience, in social media. You see a lot of hate. Because social media is really good for some things and it's really bad for others.** And nowadays for example a racer cannot say an opinion, a personal opinion and everyone will go to like bash them online or stop and talk like bad things about them. They can be fans of the sport and not like a racer or a lot like a personality of a racer, but they're still racing and they're still there. And I don't think they're not fan because of that, but I tend to not engage with these people.
- Yeah, it's more of a thing of, respect and stuff like that, but everyone has their own opinions, and that's fine.
- So now coming a little bit to a second part, there is to understand more the attraction offence to Formula One. So, we're going to start a little bit with you starting with what attract you and you told me you've been following Formula One since a long time. **Since when have you followed Formula One more or less?**
- Yeah. **I have always remembered watching Formula One since I was a kid. My father was a really big fan of the sport, and he would watch the races.** When they were available on an open channel in Portugal, he would always watch the races and I was like a little kid, and I would watch with him. And when I was a toddler, I really liked fast cars and all of that, so that stayed with me for a long time. Then we stopped having Formula One open channel. It was like cable paid station started broadcasting it, so we stopped watching. But my father was always a fan of motor sports in general and to be a little more specific, I started watching F1 for real when I was a little bit older, when Carlos Sainz, the son joined F1. **2015, if I'm not mistaken, because my father was a really big fan of his dad, Carlos Sainz. So, I remember watching news that his son was going to Formula One, and I remember saying, OK, now it's the time to go back to my roots and start watching Formula One again. So, since 2015, I have been watching non-stop and I have been a real fan.**

- OK, perfect. **And what do you remember was like the most that attracted you? The thing that most attracted you to Formula One?**
- **First of all, like the emotional part of watching because of my dad. So, I had that attachment to the sport because it was something that I had in common with him. So, until today it's something that I think about it when I watch the races, but it's something that I think that emotionally it's a really big part of why I like it.** And I also like the excitement of the races, and I really like seeing how everything is made, and the cars and **I always liked cars and always liked fast cars and motor sports in general**, so that's why, I guess.
- OK. **And so that's also how did the attraction to Formula One came about, right? It was to your father?**
- **Yes.**
- And for instance, right now, with all the attention that Formula 1 has on social media and all of that, there is a tendency to put the more focus on the drivers as a little bit of the soul of the sport and the human part of the sport. **Do you think that a greater focus on the drivers makes Formula One more attractive to fans?**
- **Yes, I think. As I said previously, social media is really good for some things and really bad for others and I think not only social media, but their Netflix show was something that bought a lot of new fans and a lot of girl fans.** Some years ago, we knew, like the life of a lot of drivers, there was a lot of conversations going on about them. But nowadays people are really, I don't think this is the right word, but a lot of people are really obsessed with, like, their personal lives and especially the younger racers. There are a lot of people concerned about who are they dating, where are they travelling to, and I think that's a lot. Why Formula One nowadays is more focused on the racers and not on like the brands or the team brand or the cars or the results? I think that's why nowadays a lot of the fans focus more on the racers and their lives as a celebrity and not as a racer.
- OK. Yeah, it makes sense with all the attention.
- Can I add something? For me Formula One in my opinion not like excluding male or female fans, but Formula One became very socialised status thing. There are news

about who is going to the paddock watching the races which teams are going to invite this celebrity or this singer or this model or whatever. And we have more coverage in the beginning of the races. We have more coverage on like the broadcast on live TV which famous celebrities are there. Where are there? Like Williams invited something someone? McLaren invited this person, and you have more coverage on live TV on. Why are these people there or what people or whatever for whatever the reason they were invited and it's more of a show of a status show. For example, Miami races are known for the celebrities that are attending. I think that 70% of people commenting online, like making the F1 Miami race or Miami Grand Prix trending on Twitter are not watching the race, they're just watching waiting to see celebrity looks and who's dating who. And I think that that also sums up the male perspective on.

- Yeah. It's also like some people I've seen also commenting they're just like, they like that singer or something, and they ended up commenting about the Miami Grand Prix.
- This last race in Monaco there like there was a crash at the beginning of the race and if you went to the hashtag trending on X, the majority of the posts were not about the race were about an actress that was there, and I wanted to see the recap of the crash and it was just pictures of a celebrity there.
- Yeah, I understand it. So that's it. We came to a conclusion of the interview. Thank you so much for your time again. Thank you for your help.
- Yeah. Thank you. Bye
- Thank you. Bye

Appendix F – Transcription of interview of female 2

- I really want to thank you for accepting the invitation. It's really a big help, so as I informed you before, this is for my master's dissertation. And the focus is female Formula One fans. So that's why it's so important also that you accept it. And the interview, it's not going to take a long time.
- Ok.
- So, we're going to just like starting to talk a little bit of like characteristics of female Formula One fans and then a little bit of the attraction to the sport and stuff like that. If you have any doubts or something that I might say that you don't understand, be my guest to interrupt, feel free to do it. So, to begin with, I want to understand **what are the main characteristics that you feel a fan of Formula One needs to have?**
- OK. **So well, I think we need to understand that it's about the race itself. It's about the cars. It's not about the drivers themselves.** I mean, part of it is I guess, but for me, the attraction was the fast cars. When I first got into it because I started when I was a child. So yeah, it's for the idea of not just knowing like this, like just seeing these fast cars. It's just also knowing like the science behind it and all that stuff as well for sure.
- OK. So that's what you feel that the characteristics of a Formula One fan need to have. It's more connected to the sport and the behind of it, right?
- Yeah, yeah, because. I mean, I got into it before social media, so. We didn't have that, so there was none of the this, this attraction to the sport for the social side I would say.
- OK. Yeah.
- So, I got in through it by just watching on TV and just seeing these cars go fast.
- Yeah. OK. Perfect. **And how important it is to be like passionate about Formula One to be considered a fan? Is it important?**

- **I think yes** because I don't understand how you can be a fan without knowing it like, how can you be a fan of a driver but then not know what they do for a job? **You have to be passionate to want to know more.**
- OK, perfect. And for instance, there are some people that say that if you don't wear team colours or something when you watch it or go to a live event that you're not really a fan. **Do you think it is important to wear team colours?**
- **No, I don't think it's that important.** Like it's nice to support them, but I barely have any merch myself. So, like, I don't think you necessarily need to, like it costs money. **It's additional money as well. Buying all this merch and they always send out new ones every single year.** So that's, I mean I understand people feeling there is like a need to buy it, but there really isn't. You can even do your own merch if it's better instead of spending a lot of money on the official stuff.
- Perfect. And another question that I actually have to really understand is that you being a female Formula One fan, **do you think it has any impact when you see like teams putting out sometimes their merchandising like a special woman merchandising or something like that?**
- **Yes, because I'm quite small so I always struggle with like the sizes that they have** and like that specific, like I noticed that McLaren quite recently actually they have started releasing women's tops and I was like oh that's nice because that's rare in like all the teams as well. **Yeah, I think it's good that they're now being more inclusive. They're also including more kids, kid's clothes as well, which is quite good. Yeah.**
- Normally the merchandising, it's either men's or they put unisex in it it's sometimes harder with the sizes.
- Yeah, exactly.
- Yeah, it's true. And **do you think like to be a Formula One fan, a true Formula One fan, do you think it's more valuable to just like support Formula One as a whole as a sport or to support one of the teams or the drivers?**

- Well, I don't know. I think part of me, says a team. Because I feel like you can be way more in depth as a fan. Get way more like, more inclusive stuff as part of a team and like, get more involved with other fans as well as that part of being like a like a fan of a specific driver or specific team you can get into that little circle on social media, for example. But if you don't have that or you're a general fan of just Formula One, I find it quite like it's quite hard to kind of get yourself into the into it really like. I don't know. It's kind of difficult to explain.
- No, you actually you actually explained pretty good. So don't worry you are doing perfect. Thank you. And for instance, there's another kind of dimension that appeared to me during my research. It concerns the story of the sport. There are a lot of classifications that include the story of the sport. There's something that a fan needs to have. **So, concerning the history of Formula One that it's very long, do you think it is important to know it to be a fan?**
- **Not necessarily. I think you can join at any time and start off from where you're at for sure, because like I don't know much of the history like I've got like before I was born or before like 90s.** I don't really know much of the history of it. I've never really looked into it, which is probably quite bad, but. **But no, I think you can join any time like there's always new drivers. There're always different teams. There's like always different. Every year is different, I feel like.** So yeah, I don't think the history is too important.
- OK, perfect.
- Like it's like nice to know but yeah.
- But not like really essential OK, perfect. And another thing that I kind of notice and then I ended up reading about it it's about the fun that sometimes fans have. So, I wanted to know, like, **do you have fun supporting a team or a driver and watching Formula One itself?**
- **Yes, I do. Yeah, that's why I watch it for because it's fun. I probably wouldn't be watching it if I found it boring, for sure,** but I find in the last like couple of years because I didn't join any like social media like of Formula One until like 2020. So, I didn't really follow any of the drivers or any other fans on social media at the time. So, I was just watching it on my own, which was fine, but since then I'm like

finding all these people who also watches. **I find it quite fun now, like, way more fun because there's like, watch a long's as well now. So yeah, it's quite fun.**

- **I was going to ask you, what part do you like most about it. Would you say you have like two different things that you liked? Like you have a favourite part about it before social media now after social media?**
- Yeah. I mean, it's always just the race. **Like before social media, I wouldn't watch any of it live, I would watch it later on. But now with all the social media and the watch a long's, I tend to watch all the sessions like as close as possible to live or at the same time as they're being live. Yeah, because it's like the fear of missing out and getting spoiled.**
- Yeah, it makes sense. Yeah, with the social media now you can get a lot of spoilers. It's true. Yeah, it's true. So actually, you were talking about the things about watching live and attending Grand Prix's and stuff like that. And **do you also think, like, how important do you think it is to have a certain frequency in attending Grand Prix?**
- **Yeah. So going to a live event is really a good experience to go to because it's so different to watching it just on TV. But I feel like you need to be a fan to go to a race rather than just watching it just because it's like the latest fad. But like, I don't really agree like all the social media influences going, if you have no idea what it is.**
- OK. Yeah, yeah, I understand that. And for instance, another thing that comes a lot of influencing people, sometimes other people to consider like, oh, you're a fan, you're not really a true fan is sometimes the behaviour that fans have, or at least people consider themselves fans. **And for instance, in relation to that, if you see someone either on live events or not, but if you see someone has a negative kind of negative behaviour, do you consider that person still a fan?**
- **It depends, but they usually are a fan that's not happy with the result. Because it's usually a fan of another driver who is not happy with what the result is because their driver's not done as well as the others. I kind of dismiss it. I'm I just don't really pay attention to them really.** I just I find I find them quite funny;

I don't really take them seriously. I just don't see why someone's behind a keyboard doing that anyway, so yeah.

- OK. Yeah. So now passing to a little bit of a second part that it's talking about to understand where attracted fans to Formula One. **You already talked a little bit about this and since more or less is when have you followed Formula One?**
- So, I started watching casually, like in the 90s, so like 97 or 98 and then 2007, I kind of started looking into it a little bit more when Sebastian Vettel joined because he was my favourite driver and then since 2020 I would say is when all the lockdown was happening and I decided to like start following all the people online and see what they're doing. Especially like I think I saw like a tweet from Lando on my "for you" page, whatever and it was a tweet to his stream and then I was like, oh, they have social media, I should probably start following all these people and that's how I kind of kind of got more involved into, like, the fandom side of things. I think, I guess. But yeah, I yeah, I've been a while, been here for a while, for sure.
- OK, great. And what, **what would you say that most attracted you to Formula One?**
- **So, it's probably well, it was a Monaco Grand Prix. In like 1997 or something, there was like a crash, and I remember that being like burned in miles and ever since then, I was like, fascinated by these fast cars.** Who that would do anything and like crash at these high speeds. Yeah, I remember that quite clearly.
- OK, perfect. And **how did the attraction to Formula One, also like came about like it was like family decided on your own?**
- **So, I was in like, I was watching TV. I was just scrolling through the TV and it ended up on the F1. Also, on because I live quite near Silverstone.** In the summer, when it's the race where I used to live in my family home, you could hear the cars, so it used to be a thing as a child to always have the Silverstone Grand Prix on TV, even though we weren't really watching it properly. So we'll be able to hear it live and then also see it on TV. So, we do that all the time. So that's partly how I got into it. But there was like a period where my family had watched other sport in the living area, and I wasn't really into football or cricket or tennis. So, I'll be in the other room watching Formula One.

- OK. Yeah. And you also mentioned that lately it's been like a different era to the sport with the social media and with the drivers during the lockdown and stuff like that. **So, do you think that it's like a greater focus on the drivers is kind of like the souls of the sport, the human side of the sport makes Formula One maybe more attractive to fans?**
- **Yeah, I do agree with that now. Because they are the sole focus of it. Every like they're who you see on TV. They're the people who are driving it.** So, you don't really see anyone behind the scenes really doing any of the work anymore. So, it's just them, yeah.
- OK. Yeah, that's perfect. OK. So yeah, that was basically it. I just need, I just needed a few questions because, you're basically my starting point to understand, what I need for my dissertation.
- No worries, yeah, I hope I've helped.
- It helped a lot actually and you were my first interview. So, thank you.
- Oh, nice.
- Yes, thank you so much. And you have like my social media and also my e-mail contact in the informed consent. So, if you have like any other questions, feel free to ask.
- Yeah. Good luck with it.
- Thank you so much and have a nice day. Bye.
- Thank you so much. Bye-bye.

Appendix G – Transcription of interview of female 3

- So, we are going to like to start a little bit with the basics of the characteristics of a female Formula One fans and what may be considered like a true fan should have for you. **What characteristics do you feel that a formula, a fan of Formula One needs to have?**
- From my experience there is like 2/2 type of formula fans. There was the one who are enjoying more technology parts of it like strategic part of it this is like very big topic. For example, I have no idea about it. I just watched some videos to know what was going on with everybody's car, but I I'm no physicist I have no idea what they're talking about. But when they speak about it, I know what it is, but you know, it's not the top for me. And there's like other part like for me, I do enjoy the show, the excitement of it, the drivers, drivers part of it. But not in the pathway, like female fans are like, oh, he's very handsome. I watched race for him. **So, I simply do enjoy the sport and it's that for me. I just simply enjoyed the show, and this is like my way to spend the weekend. I watch that, I laugh about it, I read memes. I have like my opinions, and I really like that because of the passion. And if you watch, if you do something without the passion, I hardly think why people call that being a fan or say that's not important. So, yes, I think the passion is the most important thing.** Now nowadays, with all the media, all the social media content creators, we do have like platform to get to know everything from how the car works, what they argue about the tyres, the degradation, blah blah blah, all those things so we can easy access to them. Especially there's people who try to explain that to us, which is fun because you learn something about it as well and you know, once it got into motorsport of the role you start because F1 is not every week. So, you start watch every other series.
- Yeah.
- This is what is different between girls and boys. When boys got fixed about something.
It's fine, but when we love something and we put passion into it, it's just like, Oh my God, it's a girl, blah, blah, blah, blah. **So yeah, it's always like our passion is not to**

the sport but to some guy in that sport, and that's not the case at all most of the times.

- Yeah. No, I completely get that. And another thing that I encountered in the research was about like team colours, you know, wearing team colours. **Do you think it is important to wear the team's colours?**
- **I think it depends because, it's the same as with the football. Fans are like I live in the town where there's like 2 clubs and they always like fighting with one another. You know, just kind of hostile. So, in here, I couldn't wear any merch from the team I support because I would be simply afraid for myself.** Just simply as that. I know that not every fan is this fan, but I know that you sometimes could meet someone with bad day, and that's basically the baseline. When the aggression starts. So I try to avoid it. **But with F1 I think it depends on the place. Because for example, when I watch my friend last year went to Monza. And she said because there is like a lot of Ferrari fans, like a sea of red and but she also saw that people from different teams, from McLaren and every single day went together and nobody pick up a fight. They were like, cool. You know, all you're here to for enjoy the sport.** Fantastic. She also changed her team colours because she has Ferrari, McLaren and someone else. I don't remember during the whole weekend, and she got like a group of friends, and nobody said a thing about it. Like oh, you are here for sport like not for a team, not for a driver. So, I do believe this is very important like you have your favourites, you always will have your favourites. So, it's logic that if you play at home, there will be mostly your colours and when you play away there will be more of your opponent's colours. But F1, we do not have home in away. We do have like a team like because there is each country each track, right? So there is nothing like that. There's no, like, technically hostile environment, I think. So I mean, just wear your favourite colours. That's it, because this is what F1 should be, colourful bearing enjoyment, excitement, racing. I know we don't have that much, but I think this season we might get it.
- Through and actually it's curious that you brought that side up, of just being proud and wearing the colours they want and all that, because another thing that sometimes comes up with, like as a question that people like criticise or something, **it's about**

wearing official merchandising or not like does it make a difference whether it's official or not?

- **Not really honestly, the official merch is not cheap at all so that's a big factor when choosing.** And with now fandom merch, I think there's a difference because if someone have their original ideas and they sell that, I think it's fine. But there's a lot of cases when people stole, like someone drew up on art, for example, and there's a lot of cases when people stole that fan art and put their print without their consent and such stuff. So, I think this is very important to notice because it's hard to know these days with all the Internet AI's and things it's hard but yeah this is this the thing because if you buy your merch, official or not, it's supporting your team I believe.
- And recently years. There are also teams that don't sell, just like men or unisex. They also sell woman clothes. **And do you think like it's having this kind of special woman merchandising, it is important?**
- **See, obviously I don't think they should be male or female. That's the first thing because I don't know is for example, if you go through Lando's shop, he doesn't have like female like, he just has unisex. I love that and here's why. I'm not angry that they do not have specified female because of course we do have different types of body that's in recent fashion and for comfort of my own, I prefer to buy oversized because let's be honest, woman shirt as you can see now sometimes show too much.** I do not feel like being having like a lot of exposed. I just don't feel comfortable with that overall. So, I do prefer sometimes buying my men clothes simply because they're usually cheaper and better quality. **The thing is, with unisex it's very like the group of people. You do not put stack on them, but on the other side it's nice to have male/ females simply because they're kind of acknowledged female.**
- Yeah, yeah, yeah, definitely. And another thing that you actually mentioned, it was about like supporting Formula 1 as a sport or supporting teams or drivers. **Do you do you think that to be a Formula 1 fan is there like one more valuable than the other, like it's more valuable to support Formula 1 as a sport or to support one of the teams or drivers?**

- I just think that the thing with this kind of sports and everything that you get interested in there must be something really big that attach to it. Well, the race that I start, well, I was watching Formula One as a kid when Robert Kubica was in F1 because he's a polish driver. But for me back then it was very boring. I didn't enjoy that much. My dad was more into it, but I still watch it sometimes. But then I watched Hungary 21. And what attached me again to the sport was the Hamilton situation that happened, and I was laughing at him. He was going to remember because I'm not. I'm not the biggest fan of Hamilton. I put it that way. It's not like I hate him or anything, but it's not my favourite driver. And I was laughing at him. I remember there was like, Oh my gosh, he's going to start and he's alone on the grid, you know, memes and stuff. And it was fun. And then once that happened that was what attached me to the sport. **You just are attached to it and it's simply fun.** And I then I start to discover like I start watching videos. I then watch DTS, which I was the most laughable moments of my life. Because I was, I watched some fan videos, some streams moments from one of those streaming over the Carlos things. And then when I watched it, yes, and they showed all the frivolity between Carlos and Lando. I swear to God, I was sitting beside TV, and I was laughing. **So, I just think you need to find something like to attach you like drive or one race that would remind into your memory.** And then you need to like do research on your own because sometimes. So yeah, I think it should just be open minded, but there's always be something that will attach you to it. For me it was probably 2021 season because it was THE season, let's be honest. But then I stayed because I simply fall in love with the sports as a whole.
- OK, perfect. And you were talking like, for instance, that you don't understand very much about like the technical part of the sport and all of that. And one thing that also came up like oh, if you know this, you're a true fan is story of the sport and Formula One has a long story. **So, do you think it is important to know the story of Formula One to be a fan?**
- **No and yes. Like I'm historic freak. I like history, OK? I know I'm weird, but when I get into something, especially with this, then you know you need to know somehow how something came up. But I don't think it is essential overall. Like this is I think if we we're going about sport this way, why don't we go around**

and ask people about our story, our nation stories. There's a lot of people who don't know the whole story and they are not less of some nationality because of that. I think this is like some kind of mechanism that people use when they try to juice it. Just I don't know how to say that like they want to show that you are not that you are lying. They just try undermining you.

- Yeah, that makes sense. You also talked about like the enjoyment and basically the fun of that you had watching Formula One. **So right now, you do you have like fun supporting a team or a driver or just watching Formula One?**
- **Oh, do I have a fun watching Miami? It was ***** midnight, and I couldn't scream because I would wake up my neighbours. Do I have excitement right now? Of course I do have excitement. Like I watch Monaco on Sunday. I still have excitement in me. Fun is another main thing that makes me always want to watch Formula 1, it's an amazing sport.**
- Another thing that came up was like attending Grand Prix's like the frequency of attending **how important do you think it is to have, like a certain frequency or something in attending Grand Prix?**
- **I mean, I've never been to a race simply because I cannot afford to it. It's not like I don't want to because I would love to go to Hungary because it's the closest and the cheapest, I think, but for instance, the great thing about Grand Prix's are more for the vibes and the whole environment of it. It's not a definitive factor to be a fan since, like me I'm a fan and never went to a race so that's says a lot already.** I had a plan to go to Baku this year because the race was on my birthday, but the price killed me for example.
- Yeah, that's very understandable. And regarding the behaviour of another people, sometimes they have some kind of negative behaviour, and this can happen on live events or online. **So, if you have someone that considers themselves a fan and they have some kind of negative behaviour that can impact you or not, do you still consider them to be a fan?**
- **No.** The thing is, the best example is about me, I don't like Lewis Hamilton. I just never find like vibe with him, but I don't go online and then don't hate on him because this was because this man done a lot. I cannot take away his achievement because he's

done a lot that needs to be acknowledged. But I don't like him. It doesn't mean I go and lie and **** on him online that oh, you are like this. I just don't mind him. **I read somewhere that you cannot win, arguing with stupid person because they've done it more than you, so you always lose. So, I just don't mind people like that, because for me they don't really deserve the attention.**

- Yeah on the Internet there's sometimes a difficulty to respect different opinions than your own. And so now we're going to start like the last part of the interview. And it's most of your understanding what attracted fans to Formula One. **Since when have you followed Formula One?**
- Hmm, let me think. So long story short, **it was in 2020 when I was dating this guy that liked Formula 1 and watched Hungarian Grand Prix. That was officially when I started to actually watch F1.**
- Right now, we have a bit of like, a greater focus on the drivers as the soul of the sport. **Do you think that that way to focus on the drivers like this makes Formula One more attractive to fans?**
- **The thing is, I think yes and no, because this is also how they use the platform.** Like Lewis is the best example of how to use social media, especially with recent events. You probably say that he was the only one driver to speak up. There is nothing but respect for me to him, even though I'm not his fan. But this is respectful things to do, and I pray that what he's doing with his platform because he has millions of people following him and this is how he uses platforms. This time goes for every kind of event they go like some of the drivers are helping, like Carlos and Lando, and I think Fernando, they all have, like their karting academies. The thing is, they were given opportunity to be on the top shelf of the motorsport, like being in the limited seats that are considered the best in Motorsports. So, they got famous because of that and the way they're using the platforms is up to them. **I do enjoy what they show to us, what they want to show to us like they're showing their little things in their lives, some big, some adventures like I know there will also be a lot of adverts and stuff. It's fine. Contracting to have sponsors, I understand that. So, it's really amazing to have the focus on the drivers and can really attract more people, but then there's the dark side of it,**

the people that are attracted by the gossip and all that. I don't really like that, I hate it, like give it a break, they all are human and have their personal lives as well.

- Yeah. Yeah, that's very true. We've made it. What you gave me amazing answers and amazing perspectives to go on.
- Yay, I hope I help you with this.
- It was a big help, yes. Thank you so much once more, and if you have any doubt or need anything from me let me know.
- Thank you, have a nice holiday. Bye-bye.
- Thanks, bye.

Appendix H – Transcription of interview of female 4

- So just to hear a little bit of everything, it's not going to be a very long interview because this is just the first part of my work that I have to do. So, it's a little bit by bit and first of all, I wanted to talk to you about like the characteristics of a female Formula One fan and what's something we have to have to be considered fan and stuff like that, OK.

So my first question is for you, what characteristics do you feel a Formula One fan needs to have?

- OK.
I don't know, I just. **I just enjoy watching it.**
- OK, **so basically you just enjoy it, and you don't feel that there's specific characteristics that a fan has to have?**
- **Not that I can think of, just long as you enjoy what you're watching, and you want to learn more about it.**
- OK, great. Perfect. That's a great answer as well.
- And for instance, doing my research, I ended up discovering like different bits and stuff that they say a female sports fan has to have and stuff like that. And one thing was about like the passion for the sports. So, **for you, how important is it for you to be like passionate about the sport to be a Formula One fan?**
- **Yeah, because it's a passionate sport to watch because, I mean, a lot goes on.** Granted, yesterday's race was a little bit boring, but that is Monaco because it is quite with it being a street circuit, it's quite restrictive of the overtakes, but then you get races, say like Miami for instance. And it's just that obviously for the time difference is like I was awake till 1:00 AM because I had to watch it all. I had to watch all the interviews I had to see Lando, again with the trophy. And I can lose my voice at times because I'm just shouting at, they can't hear me. I know they can't hear me, but I will shout and roar at the TV. Say I'll get out of the way and all you're being an idiot. That's me putting quite leak because I probably would be swearing a lot more. But, you know, just things like that because it's a sport you can get so passionate about and you get sucked into everything. And so, you want to find out more about it.

And there's a guy, Ted Kravitz, you know? I like watching his notebook where he walks about the paddock and stuff afterwards. And it's like, and he does little things and it's like how he explains things and see, right, This is why they've changed the nose. This is why like it's the tyres and some tyres are better than others and it's just how it dependent on the teams, how they work, the tyres. So, it's all those sorts of things. I've been watching it since the mid 90s. So, I've been watching it for quite a long time.

- Yeah. So, the passion just extends to a lot of different things beyond the race as well. OK, perfect.
- Yeah. Yeah.
- Speaking also about like sometimes wearing team colours, **do you think it is important to wear team colours?**
- **When I was at Silverstone, there was some people without it, but I would say 9 times out of 10 people I would see they are wearing whatever team they support,** but to me it's the same. It's like football team. You wear their shirt when you go to the match, you know things like that. **So, it's just the same as if you're going to go to an F1 race, you're going to wear your team's merch.** So that's how I kind of see it. And I'm actually wearing my McLaren, one of my McLaren jumpers today.
- Exactly. And another thing that I ended up encountering and it raised a lot of doubt basically is that **does it make a difference whether it's like official merch or not?**
- Not really. I mean like the jumper I'm wearing now was from Hollister, or was it? See the Hollister or Abercrombie because they both sell, but that's actually got the McLaren label in it. So, they offered into it. **But you see like a lot of folks that will buy like the cheaper version because maybe they can't afford to buy other.** It's the same price as like football shirts, but I'll not always buy. When it comes out, I'll wait until they do an offer or a sale or something like that, because it seems like football shirts when they change them every year, you can't always afford. To buy them and the amount of people I'd seen that had, like, made-up T-shirts on with like obviously see like Lando's logo or George's logo or something like that. But you can tell either they've had it printed off themselves or it's like from something else you're

still supporting your driver, you're still supporting your team, you're just not paying £60 or £70 for so it. Pride of showing it, it's there.

- OK, perfect. And another thing that I realised that recently there were a lot of teams that they were starting to sell merch then instead of saying just for men or unisex that say it's women merch, **how important do you think it is to have this special woman merch?**

- Hmm. **Some people prefer to have it fitted so they'll get the size that they wear. I prefer to wear it loose, so I'm happy wearing the men's merch. It's nice that they do both.**

And like the tops are very similar, but with me being quite tall, I like it longer and the women's ones always seem to be a little bit shorter, so it's just preference, but it's nice that they do that and it's the same with the kids as well. So, I mean it's like, oh, dad, I want that shirt. But you can only get it as an adult. **At least you can get it in the women's, and you can get it in the men's in the kids sizes as well.** But it's just sometimes that sizzle's a little bit off. That's the only reason. That's another reason why I'll not wear a women's one because I do have, I've did buy one in the sale, but I had to go a size up and even then, it's it just sort of sits just below your belly button. To me, like these ones are longer and the cover everything, so I just prefer wearing men's because sometimes the women's sizes I find come up smaller.

- OK. Perfect. That's actually very interesting and that's a lot of helpful because earlier I had someone saying that it was amazing to have woman's because they are shorter. So, the men would be too big, you know, so it's amazing to see these differences.

- Yeah, it works both ways. It's like if you are smaller and then yeah, if you wanted something a bit more fitted. But I like mine looser, so.

- Exactly. OK. Perfect. And in terms for instance of the support to Formula One as a fan and stuff like that. Another thing that I encounter is that sometimes they say that to be a fan, it's to support just one team or sometimes the whole sport. **What do you think it's more valuable to support Formula One as a sport, as a whole, or for instance, one of the teams or drivers?**

- I can see it sort of both ways. See, McLaren's always been like my team. But I loved Brawn because Jason Button drove for them and what they achieved in that one

year where like a couple of months previous to that you didn't even know that they were going to be a team. You know what I mean? So, it's just it's more I support a driver and so I'll go team to team, but McLaren's always been sort of my team, even since the 90s, because all the drivers I've supported, they drive for McLaren.

- OK. Makes sense. And another thing that it came up was the story of Formula One. I mean, it has a long story. **So do you think that concerning the story of Formula One, it is important to know it to be a fan?**
- **You don't need to know every tiny little detail. Just sort of like you know, the basics is enough to like understand it,** because how cars raced in the 60s to the 70s to the 80s to the 90s to now, the cars are completely different and the safety aspect is completely different.
To me, it's like if you know the essence of how the free practises work, how qualification works, how the race works, that's enough for me. And if you want to go into every minute detail and want to know every tiny little bit to do with F1 like all the history, that's fine. That's up to you. But I can tell you some drivers from the 60s and 70s, but I couldn't tell you everything about it and it's just like it's like when you watch that the video that F1 posted where they had to name all the winners and Seb was the only one that done it and everyone's like wow and it's just like, how amazing, like, he knew that. But that's like how passionate he is about it. Like I've just been to the Jim Clark museum. It's about 1/2 an hour's drive from me, and Jim Clark was sort of born around here and he was and F1 driver and he won championships in the 60s and he's the only British driver that won the F1 Championship and the Indy 500 in the same year. And it's just like, how amazing, like, he knew that. But that's like how passionate he is about it. And it's just like after what happened.
Because like I've just been to the gym. Clark museum. It's about 1/2 an hour's drive from me, and Jim Clark was sort of born around here and he was. An F1 driver and he won championships in the 60s and he. He's the only British driver that won the F1 Championship and in Indy 500 in the same year.
- Oh, nice!

- And he sadly died. There was like a big crash, and they still don't know till this day how he died, how the car crashed. And he was like, really good friends with Jackie Stewart and Jackie Stewart pushed for more safety in the cars and things like that, and then again in the 90s with what happened with Senna is they were like, Michael Schumacher and there was like Martin Brundle, Damon Hill and a few others they were like, no, something has to change. And that's how they've pushed and pushed again for more safety. The cars are safer, and then a lot of people didn't like the Halo when it first came out, but the Halo saved Roman Grosjean from his crash.
- Yeah.
- And it what the cars are like now compared to what they were like in the 60s and 70s, they are so much safer. And how they can get away with driving so many high speeds, the drive from the tracks. And I mean like when I was watching Monaco yesterday, Ted had even mentioned in the early races cars that used to end up in the Marina actually in the water when they crashed. So compared to that compared to now.
- It's really different. Yeah, it's a really huge different. It was very important. All those changes. It's very, very true.
- Yeah, because when you look at a race car from the 60s, cause one of Jim Clark's cars is actually in the museum from the 60s, and it was just like. What they used to drive that compared to like when you see. Yeah. And it's like obviously like at the Silverstone Museum as well, you've got cars from all the different decades and when you see the shapes of them, the sizes of them.
- They're so open.
- It's amazing how much progress they've made throughout the years. I something all they're too big or they're too heavy, but you've got to think of the safety aspect in it as well so.
- Exactly. Yeah, that's really important. It's true. Now, changing just a little bit to the fun part. The thing that came up to female fans that it's important to have fun while you're watching. **So, do you have fun like supporting the driver, the teams and watching Formula One in general?**

- **Oh yeah, I will watch every session.**

I know there's off topic, but I had to go to Edinburgh, which is like an hour away on the train on Friday to try and get my phone fixed. So, I'm using the temporary phone at the now, so this is how I didn't get the discord notifications and stuff. And I'm even saying to the guy when I'm waiting to get my phone fixed and he's like, because all these notifications were popping up on my phone, he went Do you like F1? This is how do you know he goes because they keep getting notifications about how Lando is doing on your phone. I'm like, yeah, if two practises come or if practise one is finish. FP2 was about to start so everything was popping off on my phone when he was trying to sort it and there that and we'll go into a right conversation about my favourite driver, and it didn't help that I was wearing my Lando's top when I was there.

- Yeah.

- But it's just little things like that. And then as soon as I came home, I put them both on, even though I knew who was the top three of free Practice, one and two, because I had missed watching it. I watched it as soon as I got home. **I will get up at 3:00 or 4:00 o'clock in the morning to watch the race.**

- Yeah, I do that as well. So, I perfectly understand you. **And would you say that out of all that the fun that you have, what is the part that you like the most about it?**

- **I would say it's more fun now because of like obviously the girls like you guys and that I've met on Twitch. I've got people to talk to about F1** because for so long I would sort of say, oh, I'm going home because they F1 quali's coming on. If I'd been out through the day and they're like, really? And I'm like, yeah, and nobody's ever got it. And now more people starting to watch it around where I live and I might say, oh, hey, you're right. Because they've watched it on Netflix. And then they've started watching it. And I'm like, I used to drone on about F1 for years and nobody was interested. But now, because of Netflix and young people, like Lando, like George, you know, like folk have started paying more attention. But it's even then a lot of them still don't know some of the basic rules and they say, oh, he won again, blah blah, blah. So yeah, and everyone say, oh, I like this person. I'm like, right. So then I'll ask them questions. And they've got no clue. And I'm like, this is one of the

easiest questions I can ask you about a driver. This is what this is, the love and the hate I have about Netflix. Yeah, it's brought more people to watch the sport, things like that. But at the same time, I don't want to call them fake fans, but they're more sort of fangirling over the driver rather than the sport itself. And then also like you sort of see them right post and things like that when you look on threads and on Twitter and things like that and it's like you can spot the Netflix fans, you can spot the TikTok fans. They maybe only watched a few minutes, they've never sat and watched a whole race and then were like, oh, this is boring, blah blah blah. And I'm like, yeah, you've just watched the highlights.

- Yeah, I know. I perfectly understand. And for instance, in terms of attending a Grand Prix, so the live events, **how important do you think it is to have like a certain frequency in attending Grand Prix's?**
- **It's the price for me that a lot of them, the prices are going up and up. I've not, I've done Silverstone the last two years. There's no way in hell I would have been able to afford this year and last year where we sat it had gone up nearly £100.** I've been wanting to go, and I'd saved up and obviously I had like obviously with lockdown and everything a chance to save and I've not spent any money and I've managed to save up and wanted to go. And it seems to be getting quite Americanized. **There're three races over in America, and it's just like you are kind of pushing out Europeans. I mean, it's a world championship so yeah, we've got it all over the place, but the price does push a lot of people out. But it's like a once in a lifetime thing. Once you are there, it doesn't do it justice.** Watching it on TV when you walk into Silverstone, and I mean Silverstone is so massive, but you could hear all the people and the cars, and it's just like wow I'm really here.
- Yeah. Yeah, that's very true. You were also speaking about like the people coming together and just sharing in the grandstands and that's another thing that I encountered with it's like the behaviour that fans have and for instance, **in relation to that behaviour, imagine if someone has some kind of negative behaviour. Do you still consider them to be a fan?**
- **When you've seen and when you've read what people see and how they attack other fans, to me, that's not right. We all have our own opinion. I mean, I was**

surrounded by a lot of Lewis fans but luckily, they were all right, but I have heard like other things that are not so positive. I've never liked Lewis and that's my opinion. I will gladly say, oh, I don't like Lewis, but I will back up. And I went right. That's your opinion. That's mine. But it's the way some get aggressive. And it's just like I don't like that type of thing, because it does make you feel uncomfortable. **And then when I'd read about women being attacked as such, but having things said to them, you shouldn't be like that.** And if it gets to a stage where right, they should be ejected from the grandstand, told to calm down, told to sober up, told to do whatever. If this was happening outside and, in a pub, or anything like that the police would be called. That should be the same way things should happen at Silverstone or any other Grand Prix circuit. This is what we've been getting. We're physically and verbally attacked, you know, things like that. Then this should be held accountable for it.

- Yeah. So much more accountabilities would be good because it's like you said, outside, if you're in a pub or something, someone is going to call them to attention. So, it would be good to have the same exact thing on the circuits and all of that. So, it's it creates a safer environment.
- Yeah, because literally you can go in, you can go into the stadium and buy alcohol. Like no matter what time of day, you walk into that, walk into it. Yeah, you can have a fun. Have a few drinks. But it's when you see people get to the stages, like they fallen out of a pub but it's 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon.
- Yeah, yeah, there's not much responsibility sometimes and a little bit of lack of notion sometimes as well, but yeah, it happens sometimes.
- And now here, switching up a bit to understand the attraction of fans to Formula One and in this case you as a fan.
You told me you've been following Formula One since the 90s?
- Yeah, say 96. I think it was 95 or 96. I've been watching.
- OK. So, it's been also a long time. So, you also have your own history with Formula One, so that's amazing. **And do you remember like what most attracted you to Formula One?**

- **I remember always being on, on a Sunday. My dad wasn't a big fan. It was just carries and all that on the telly. But I always remembered the hairpin at Monaco. And then I used to watch sports programmes like questions about sport. And that's how I saw David Coulthard. So, I thought, all right, and I watched this, and I thought, oh, he's a good laugh. And I thought, oh, he's Scottish, then found out where he was from.** And then found out obviously like obviously he's an F1 driver. So, I just started paying a bit more attention. It was just because I liked his banter he was having on the show and I thought, oh, he comes across a right nice guy. And that's how I sort of got into it a bit more and then I when I found myself sort of cheering for him because I find out about all the other drivers who's British, blah blah, blah. And it was just sort of like that. And then it was just more and more. And it got to the stage where you have to pay for it, so I just watched Channel 4 with just the highlights, but I couldn't do that anymore because I was finding out the results before it's been shown. So, at some point they had some offer and I started to pay for it, and I was like, oh, I didn't realise how many interviews you had with other drivers and things like that. You've got the build-up and then everything else afterwards. I found a lot of the time on other channels and then also when it was just the highlights you never got all that. And it's just like it's made it such a big thing. Now it's that I love watching it so.
- Yeah, it's also like a bit more beyond the races and all. It's more like it's entertaining. It's really cool, yeah.
- Yeah, it's more than just theories. It's more than just qualifying. It's you getting to find out a bit more about what they like, like what they do like away from the circuit and things like that. And then obviously I started watching Twitch because Lando posted about. So, you kind of got to know him a little bit more this way.
- Yeah, that's a really cool story actually **on the attraction to Formula one, come about to you,** because it's different. You know, normally it's sometimes it's family friends or even newer friends and stuff like that. **So, yours it's a little different. It's a little bit of an on your own, a little bit as well because as you said your dad wasn't very much into it?**
- For sure. **It's just that if there was car race on the telly it was on and it was just like on, so he wasn't seeing it, but I loved that so much.**

- Yeah, it's really cool.
- Well, I have one just one last question and it's actually something you touched on because it's about the drivers themselves and the portray of the drivers.
- **Do you think a greater focus on the drivers as the soul of the sport, the human side of the sport, makes Formula One more attractive to future fans?**
- **I think it's the way it is now because social media is everywhere. All the drivers have literally their own Instagrams or their own Twitters, whatever, and then the teams have as well.** And I mean they employ people just to be their social media people. So, like going from like 20 years ago, you if you didn't know if they, you wouldn't know everything that you would know now about a driver or about a team because we didn't have social media. I mean, like, we barely had Google. So, it's like things like that is you would just learn from watching on the telly. But I like how, like the drivers can put across their own like it, they can sort of nearly manage what they want and what they don't want people to see. **So, it's a good thing we get to know them and they're not just this person on TV, you know, they are human. They do have feelings. So, to me it is important in a way for the driver and to know the team because it's like it's maybe like a personal feeling is like you feel that little bit closer to him because you know a bit more about it.** But it's also sometimes I find it's intrusive. When they talk too much about their personal lives like girlfriend's and stuff. They have no privacy. And that's the downfall I think, of the social media and everything is that nobody has privacy now.
- Yeah, that's a very understandable part of social media that it's hard to manage, very true.
- Well, this is it, we reached the end of our interview. Thank you so much for all your amazing answers you were a very huge help and if you have any doubts or further question feel free to contact me anytime. Thank you so much.
- Great. Thank you so much for this opportunity to express my opinions and I hope I helped. If you need any more help let me know. Bye-bye, see you.

Appendix I – Content Analysed during the Netnography Stage of the Study

F1R THE GIRLS - @F1RTHEGIRLS on YouTube

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=15oYRp_yukw

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HfSDQyWC8Ho>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lp0ScuuaMdA>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9DR7brS_kyo

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OS4wg6TbQv4>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jw_9zmIdtEk

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dvhQaj8z8ZQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7mqLkLYy2Qk>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_9fuT9Ivfc

Fan Behavior: An F1 Podcast - @fanbehaviorf1pod on Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/p/C7wTZo9uwNf/>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/C7w1SGvP8Bm/>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/C8CWgIyxDmk/>

https://www.instagram.com/p/C8E_wPXxi_Q/

<https://www.instagram.com/p/C8UfFKmOugY/>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/C8erfbBxwnI/>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/C8kGj2Cp7gv/>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/C8o-Rz9xKF5/>

Females in Motorsport - @femalesinmsport on Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/p/C7rj0gAtc-6/>

https://www.instagram.com/p/C7wmNg8vwdx/?img_index=1

https://www.instagram.com/p/C76pQMUvS6o/?img_index=1

<https://www.instagram.com/p/C8DAaWTyYOR/>

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https://www.instagram.com/p/C8Hms4Tvy98/?img_index=1

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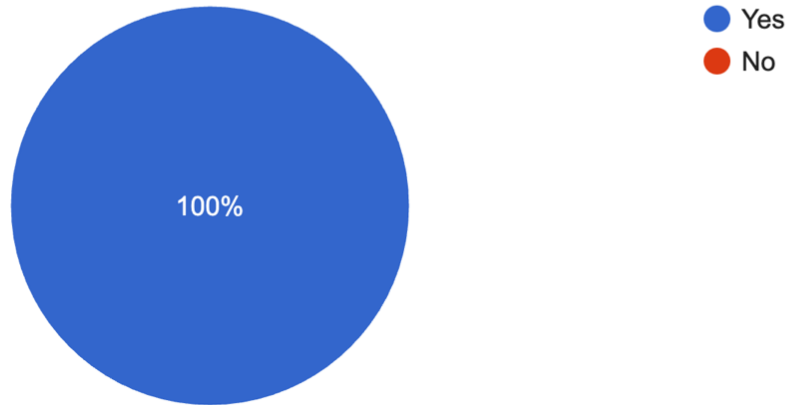
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Appendix J – Graphics with Results for each of the Questions in the Survey

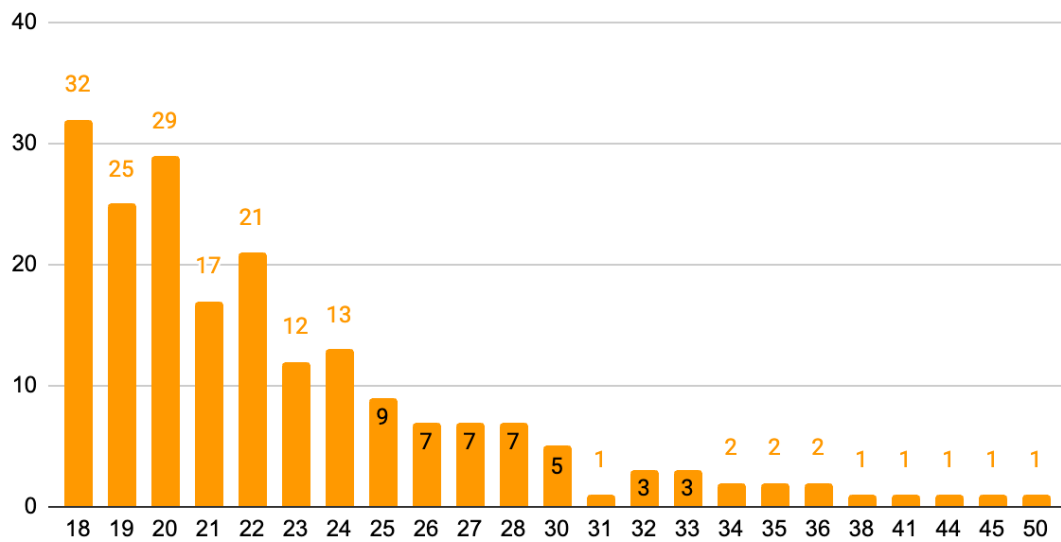
Do you wish to continue and answer the survey?

202 respostas



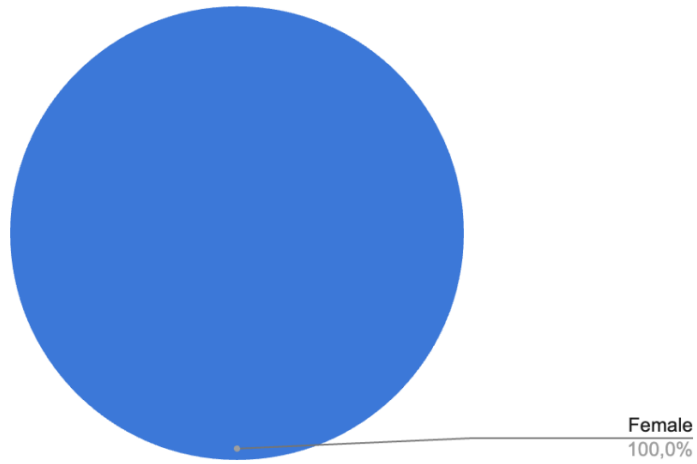
What's your age?

202 respostas



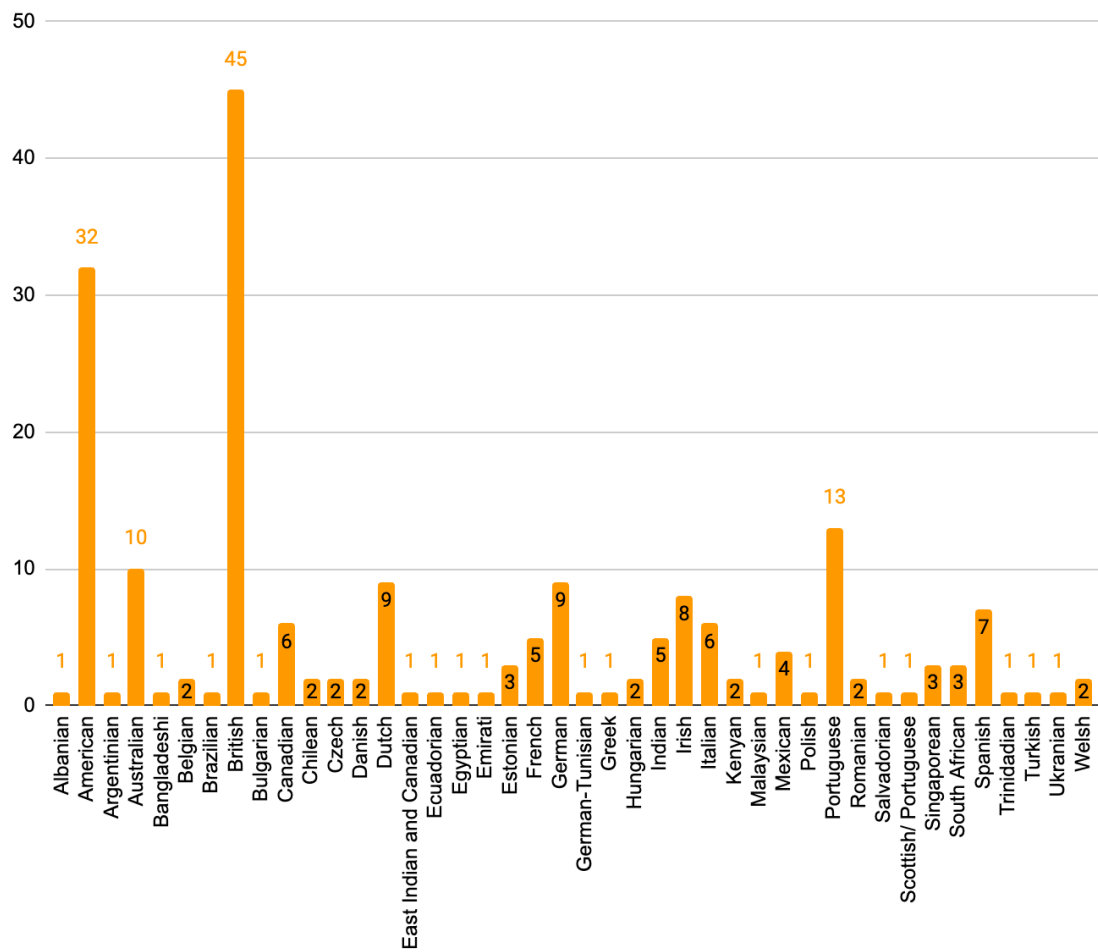
Which one do you identify with?

202 respostas



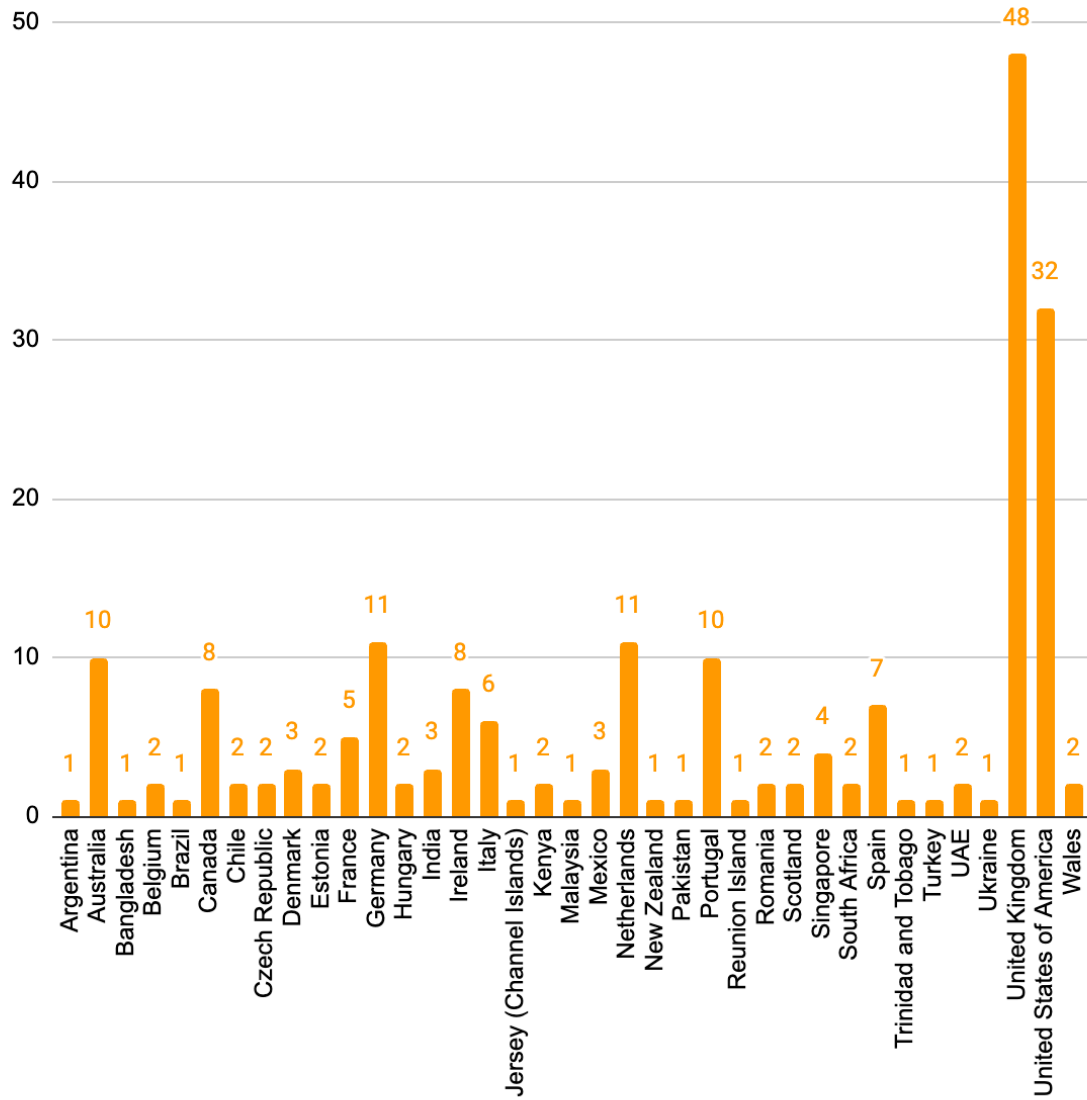
Nacionality:

202 respostas



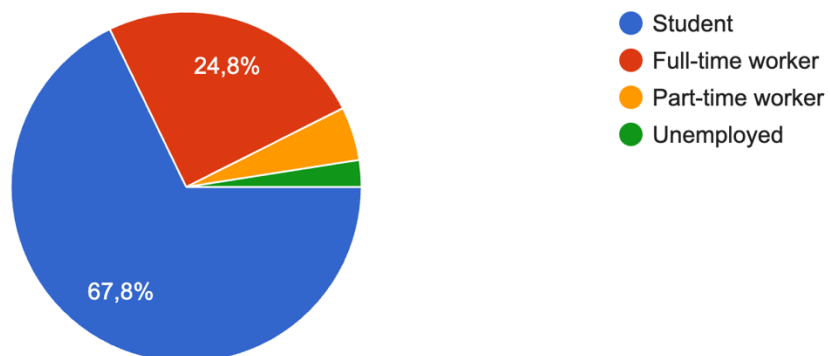
Country of residence:

202 respostas



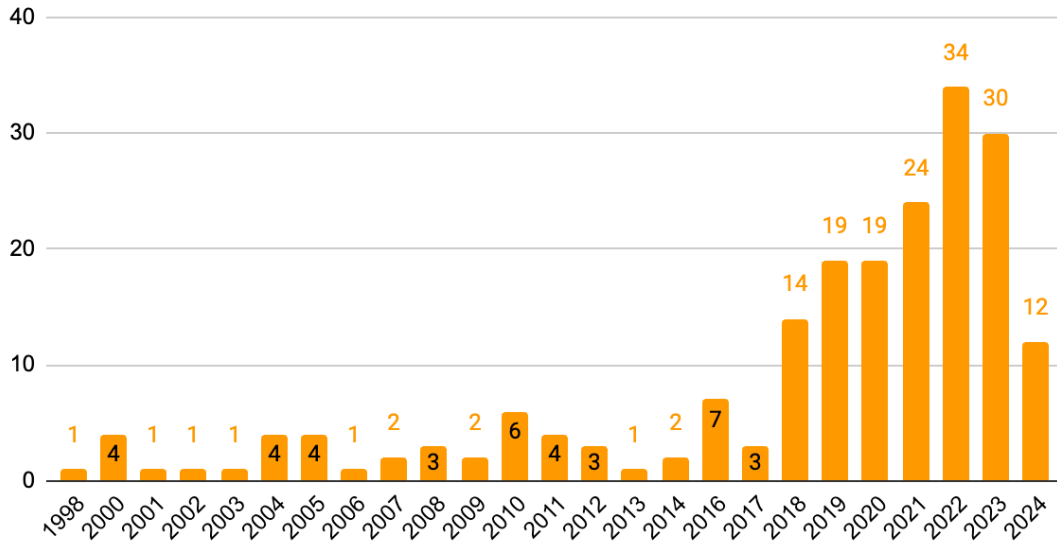
Occupation:

202 respostas



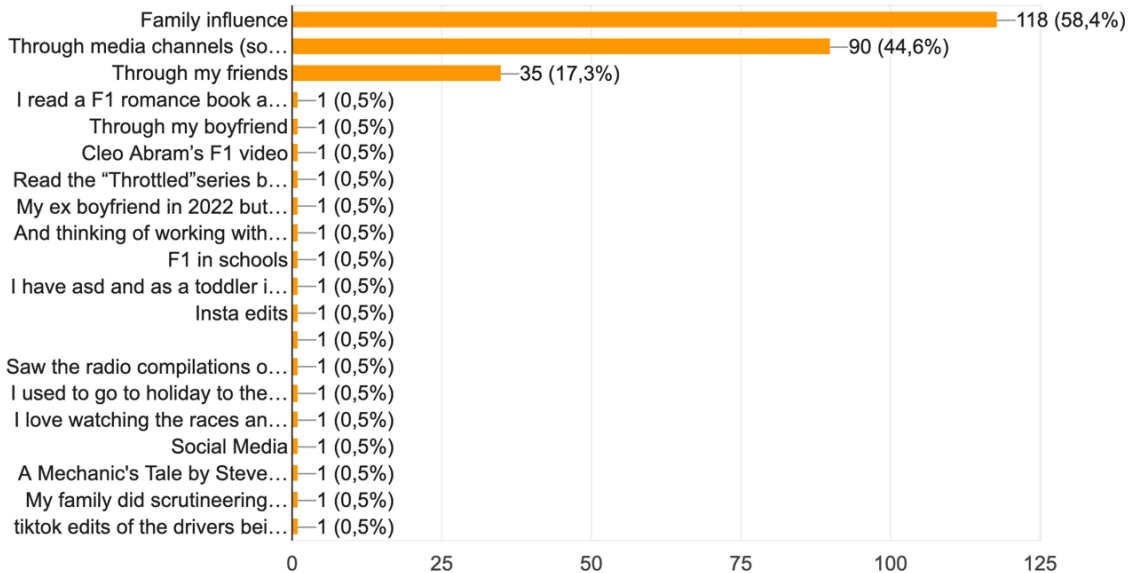
Since when did you follow Formula 1?

202 respostas



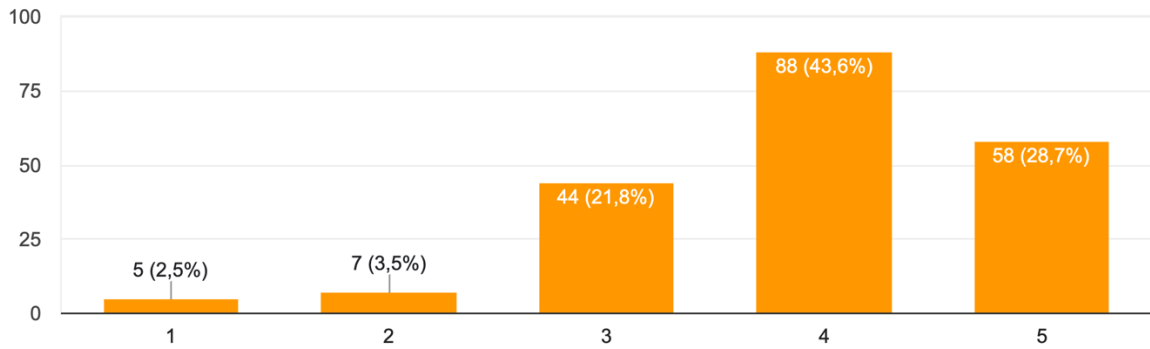
What initially sparked the interest in Formula 1? (Select all that apply)

202 respostas



Do you think it is important to be passionate about Formula 1?

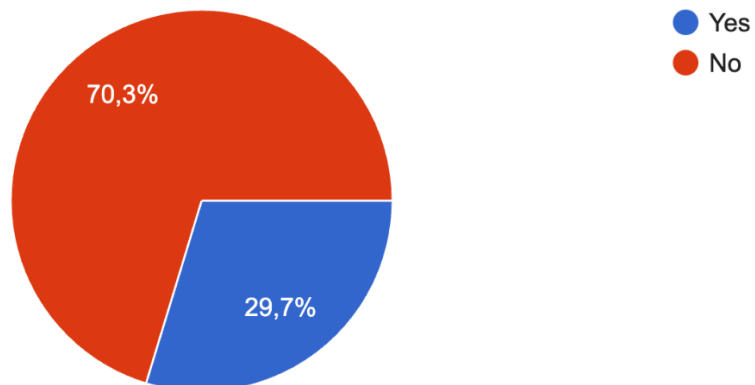
202 respostas



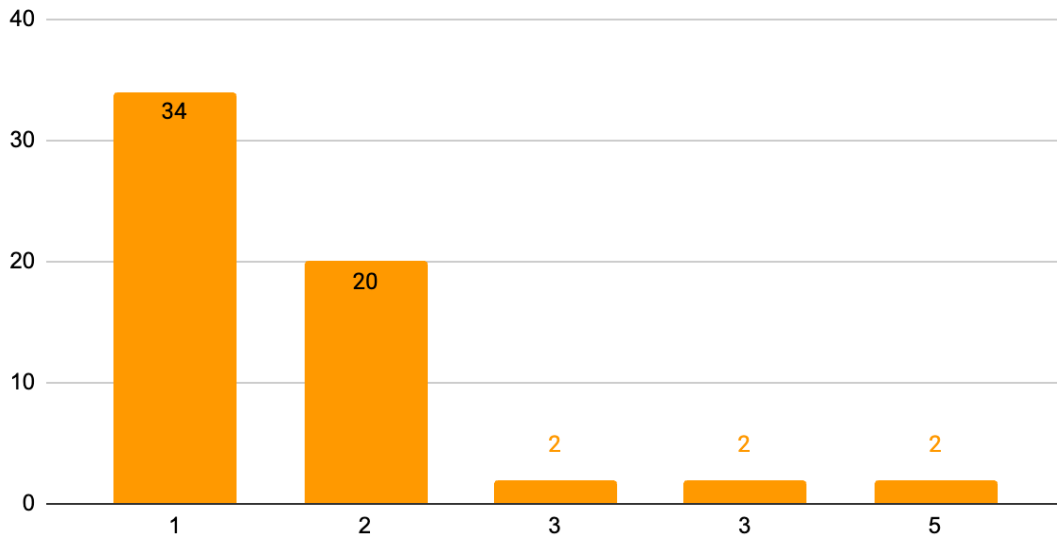
- 6. Not important at all
- 7. Not important
- 8. It doesn't make a difference
- 9. It's important
- 10. It's very important

Have you ever attended a Formula 1 Grand Prix?

202 respostas

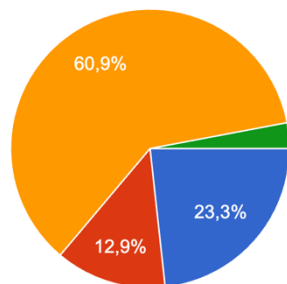


If yes, how many?



Are you a fan of a specific team/driver?

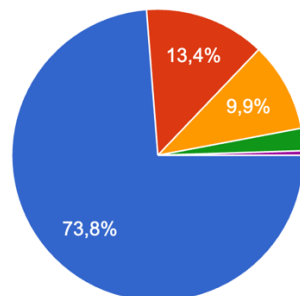
202 respostas



- Yes, I'm a fan of a specific driver
- Yes, I'm a fan of a specific team
- I like different teams and drivers
- I don't support a specific driver or team

Are you a fan of Formula 1 in general?

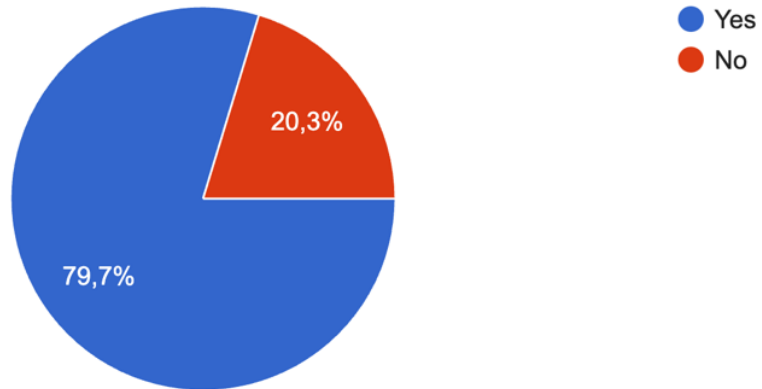
202 respostas



- Yes, I'm a fan of Formula 1 in general
- Yes, I enjoy the sport in general
- I just like the sport but I also like the teams and drivers
- No, I'm more fan of a specific driver
- No, I'm more fan of a specific team

Do you admire any female Formula 1 personalities?

202 respostas



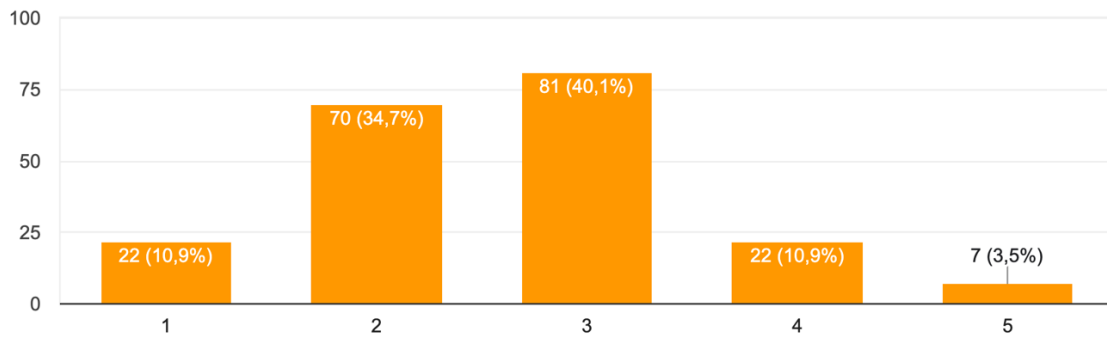
If yes, which one?

A1 - Abbi Pulling
A2 - Angela Cullen
A3 - Ariana Bravo
A4 - Basically any female that works in f1/motorsport, I deff admire her
A5 - Bernie Collins
A6 - Bianca Bustamante
A7 - British f4 girlies
A8 - Carrie Schreiner
A9 - Chloe Chambers
A10 - Claire Williams
A11 - Doriane Pin
A12 - Elena Rovelli
A13 - F1 Academy Drivers
A14 - F1 Academy drivers (specifically the Al Qubaisi sisters)
A15 - Female engineers
A16 - Female team members in general, drivers.

A17 - Hamda Al Qubaisi
A18 - Hannah Schmitz
A19 - I enjoyed Danica Patrick on Drive to Survive this past season.
A20 - Jamie Chadwick
A21 - Jennie Gowe
A22 - Jessica Hawkins
A23 - Laura Winter
A24 - Lella Lombardi
A25 - Lissie Mackintosh
A26 - Mara Sangiorgio, Italian F1 journalist (SkySport F1)
A27 - Maria de Villota
A28 - Maria Teresa de Filippis
A29 - Marta Garcia
A30 - Maya Weug
A31 - Naomi Schiff
A32 - Ruth Buscombe
A33 - ShelovesF1, F1R the Girls
A34 - Sophia Floersch
A35 - Susie Wolff
A36 - The sky sports girls
A37 - Tina Hausmann
A38 - Toni Cowan Brown
A39 - Toni Cowan Brown (social media)
A40 - Women in the teams
A41 - Zoey Edenholm racing

How do you feel about the representation in the Media of the females that work in Formula 1?

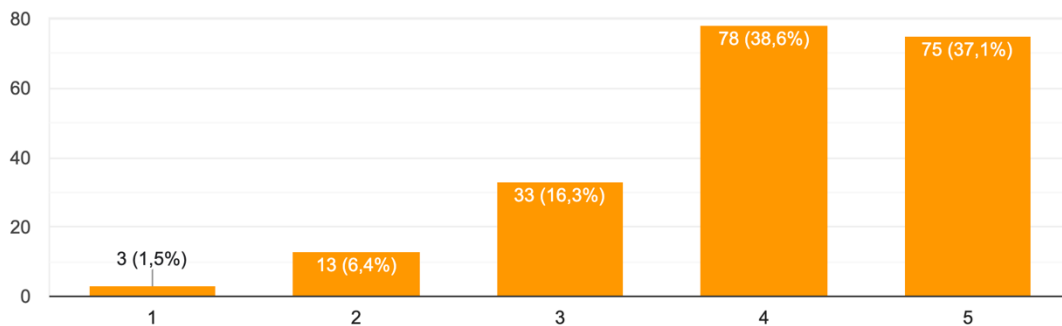
202 respostas



6. They don't have representation at all
7. They have a very low representation
8. They could have more representation
9. The representation of females is enough
10. There is a very good representation

Do you think that if there were more female representation in Formula 1, the female audience would be bigger?

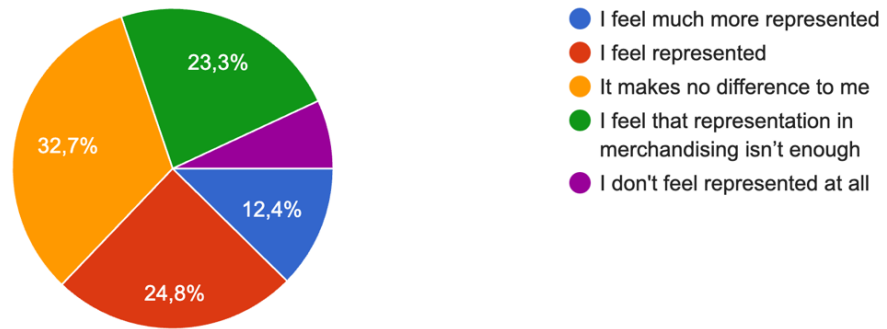
202 respostas



6. Strongly disagree
7. Disagree
8. Neither agree nor disagree
9. Agree
10. Strongly agree

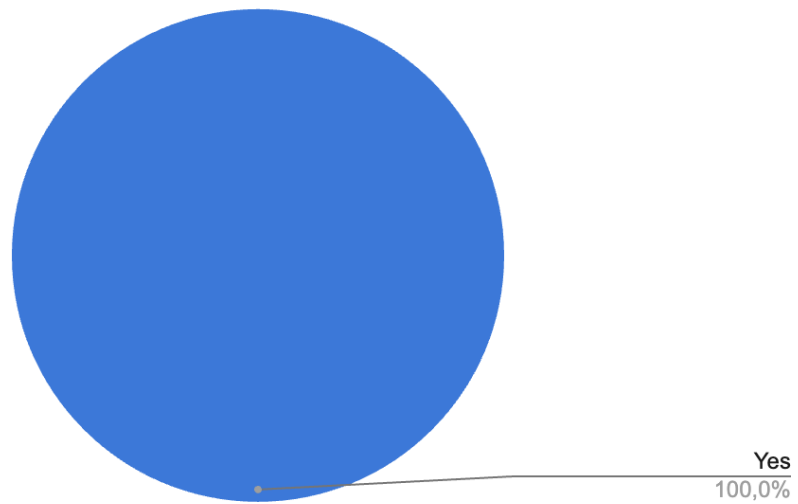
Do you feel more represented when you see that there are women merchandising available?

202 respostas



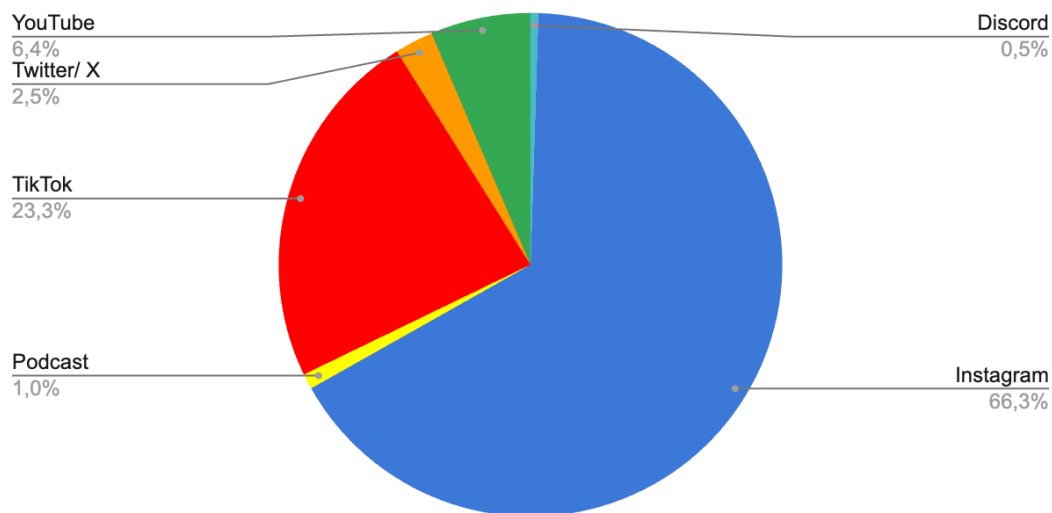
Have you come across content on social media made by female Formula 1 fans?

202 respostas



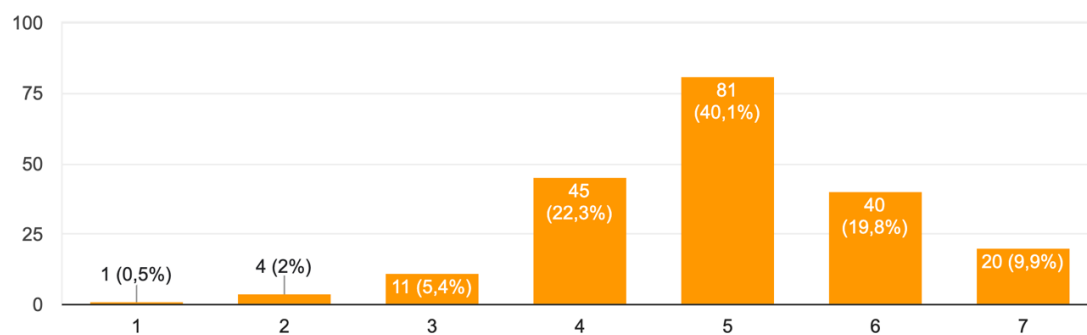
What social media channel do you consume more of this type of content?

202 respostas



I identify with the content that I saw:

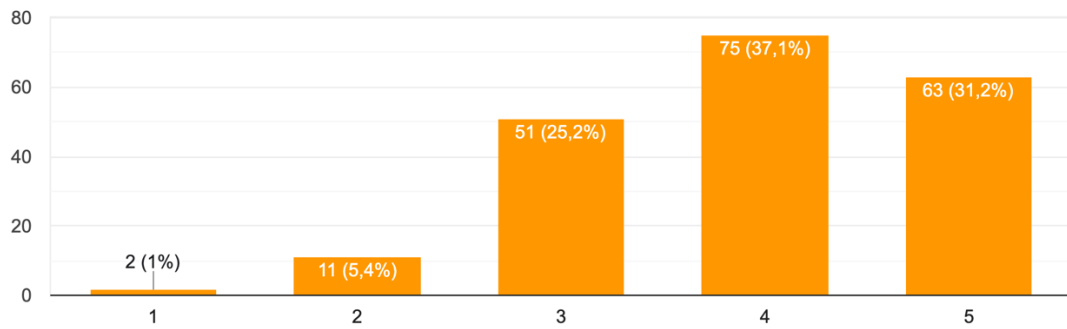
202 respostas



8. Never
9. Rarely
10. Occasionally
11. Sometimes
12. Frequently
13. Very frequently
14. Always

That content I saw made me feel more comfortable with the Formula 1 fan community:

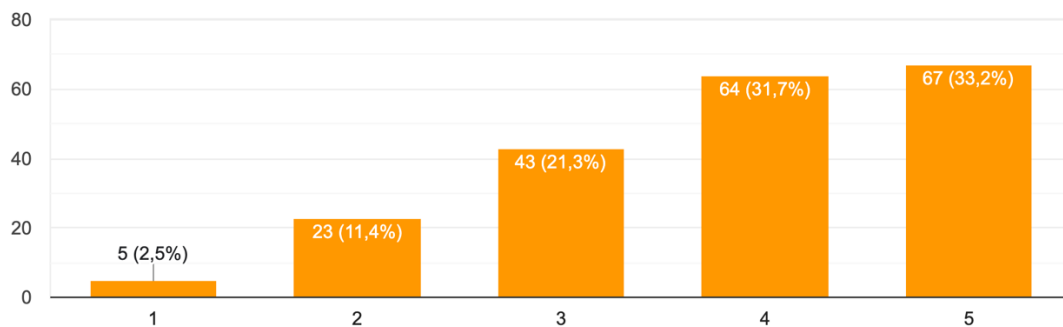
202 respuestas



- 6. Strongly disagree
- 7. Disagree
- 8. Neither agree nor disagree
- 9. Agree
- 10. Strongly agree

That content made me feel more attracted to the Formula 1 fan community:

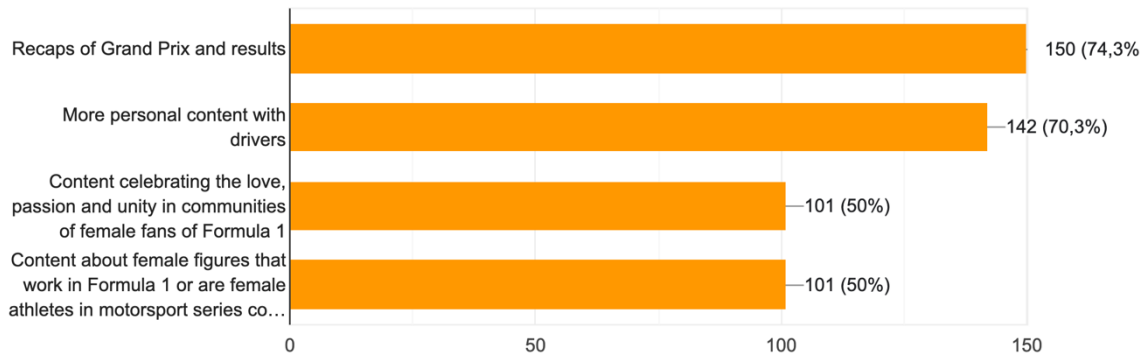
202 respuestas



- 6. Strongly disagree
- 7. Disagree
- 8. Neither agree nor disagree
- 9. Agree
- 10. Strongly agree

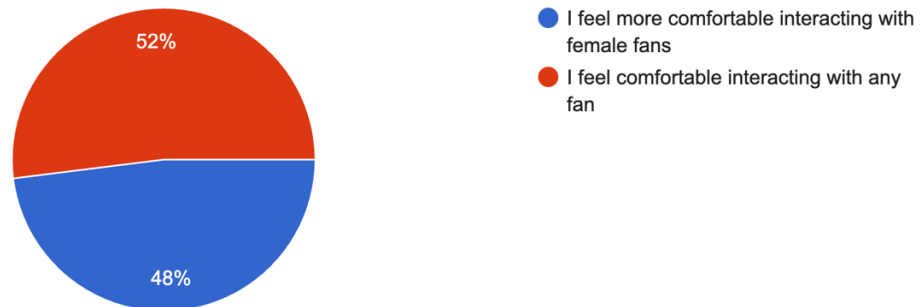
What type of content do you see more? (Select all that apply)

202 respostas



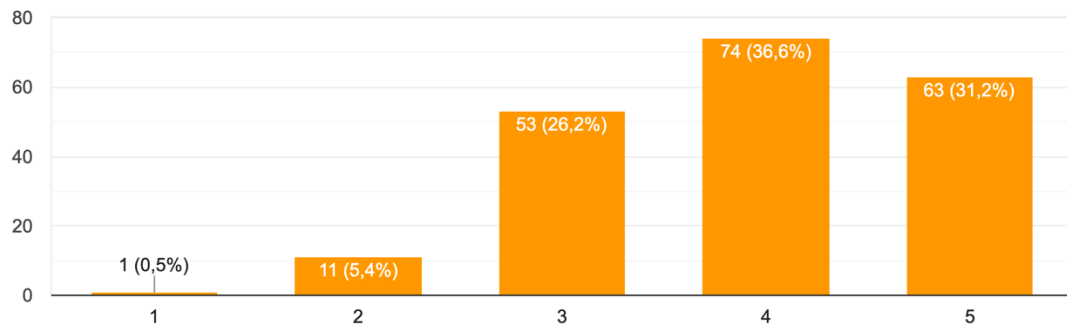
Do you feel more comfortable interacting with female fans or with any fans?

202 respostas



The greater focus on drivers (as the soul of the sport) makes Formula 1 more attractive to fans:

202 respostas



6. Strongly disagree
7. Disagree
8. Neither agree nor disagree
9. Agree
10. Strongly agree