



UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES OF *FORMULA ONE* ON
INSTAGRAM
-A CASE STUDY OF FERRARI AND MCLAREN IN MEDIA LIFE-

Dissertation to Universidade Católica Portuguesa to obtain a
Master's Degree in Digital Communication and
Transformation

By

Elisa Caissée

Universidade Católica Portuguesa

September 2024



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Resumo:

Este estudo tem como objetivo analisar, observar e fornecer uma visão geral do panorama da *Fórmula Um* nas *redes sociais* e das estratégias utilizadas para alcançar o público. A investigação enfatiza o seguinte problema de pesquisa: Que métodos são utilizados pelas equipas de *Fórmula Um* para alavancar a sua presença nas *redes sociais* no *Instagram* para promover o envolvimento do público?

A escolha metodológica é um estudo qualitativo que envolve uma análise de conteúdo, uma construção de estudo de caso de duas equipas de *Fórmula Um*: *McLaren* e *Ferrari*.

A conclusão é que ambas as equipas analisadas utilizam a plataforma *Instagram* para reforçar as ligações existentes com as suas audiências, criando e alcançando um novo segmento de público. Isto é feito através de várias estratégias, desde a humanização do desporto, dos atletas que o praticam e das equipas, até às actualizações em tempo real que tornam o seguidor uma parte bem integrada do desporto. Ambas as equipas comunicam de acordo com os valores da sua marca e utilizam diferentes meios para o conseguir.

Palavras-chave: redes sociais, comunicação desportiva, *Fórmula 1*, público e fãs, relações públicas.

Abstract:

This study aims to analyse, observe, and provide an overview of the *Formula One* social media landscape and the strategies used to reach the audience. The investigation emphasises the following research problem: What methods are employed by *Formula One* teams to leverage their *social media* presence on *Instagram* to foster audience engagement?

The methodological choice is a qualitative study involving a content analysis and a case study construction of two *Formula One* teams: *McLaren* and Ferrari.

The conclusion is that both analysed teams leverage the Instagram platform to reinforce their existing connections with their audiences, creating and reaching a new audience segment.-This is done through various strategies, from humanising the sport, the athletes practising it, and the teams to real-time updates that make the follower a well-integrated part of the sport. Both teams communicate in alignment with their brand values and use different leverages to achieve that.

Keywords: social media, sports communication, Formula One, audience and fans, public relations.

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Introduction

The *social media* landscape has rapidly evolved, transforming the whole communication landscape. This implies that it is changing the communication practices of athletes and organisations to engage with their audience.

In the realm of *Formula One*, a sport involving technologies and innovations known for it, *social media* have become an unmissable and integral tool in fostering engagement and promoting brand values.

Among those different platforms, one central platform stands out: *Instagram*. Its visual elements and visually driven interface give the team an advantage and opportunity to leverage and showcase their athletes behind the scenes and brand through different content formats that are accessible in a straightforward manner and interactive.

This study explores the diverse *social media* strategies *Formula One* teams employ on *Instagram*. It focuses on two prominent teams, *Ferrari* and *McLaren*, and their use of the platform to cultivate and maintain relationships with their fans. The research examines the daily content produced by both teams during a specific period, from February 1st to March 2nd, 2024, to understand the unique approaches they employ to communicate, engage with followers, and reach new audiences.

Despite the significant growth of digital communication in sports, there remains a crucial need for research on the *social media* strategies used by sports entities. This study specifically focuses on the strategy employed by *Formula One* teams on *Instagram*, which has become increasingly important in the sports marketing landscape.

This empirical study focuses on the explorative view of *social media* strategies used by the *Formula One* teams, focusing on the *Instagram* platform and how those last ones impact the audiences. So, by conducting the content analysis of the *Instagram* accounts of *Ferrari* and *McLaren*, this research investigates how the teams are using the *Instagram* platform to enhance their presence on digital and connect with the fan's opinions and loyalty. The study uses a qualitative method and approach, providing a deep understanding of the team's communications. It practises by emphasising content themes (topics), public relations alignment in following and engaging new audiences, and the role of storytelling.

The different findings show that *social media* in sports is strategically essential in sports communication. It provides valuable and critical insight into how *Formula One* teams leverage platforms effectively to build stronger connections with their audience and communicate.

This research shows us how sports communication, such as *Formula One*, has evolved in the context of *social media* and Media Life. This thesis is structured to explore sports communication in Media Life. The first chapter will explore sports communication in Media Life as it will in public relations.

Through the lens of digital platforms and *social media* in sports, the dissertation will explore the convergence created in sports and entertainment, the impact on corporations, and, more globally, the convergence of which we are speaking about spirit and *social media* connected all together. Chapter three will be dedicated to public relations as it is a prominent part of the *Formula One* communication aspect in connection with marketing and advertising and a solid and significant aspect of sports and entertainment connected to public relations.

When discussing *social media*, entertainment, and media life, the audience is an indispensable aspect to study and understand. So, chapter 4 discusses the sports audience, how to define it, its evolution, and the critical aspect of measuring audiences.

The findings demonstrate that both teams leverage the *Instagram* platforms' scuffle to engage with audiences and sustain fan loyalty through their distinct strategies aligned with their values.

By analysing the *Instagram* strategies of the *Formula One* team, this study illuminates how the *Formula One* team's communication strategies for their fanbase stay relevant in today's society, especially in the digital sphere, which is really fast-paced. *Instagram* has become a crucial platform for *Formula One* teams to communicate, humanise athletes, provide real-time updates, and offer immersive content and experiences.

Part I - Theoretical Framework

Chapter I - Sports Communication in Media Life

Introduction:

Digital media, digital transformation, and the global digital age are connected with media, audience engagement, and public relations, making them crucial for the sports sphere. As the digital age has impacted all sectors globally, the sports industry has been redesigned and shaped in how it communicates and engages its audiences. This chapter will explore the different dynamics between public relations, audience engagement, and media life, which will form a framework for the current research analysing how a team at *Formula One* is leveraging *social media*.

Examining Media Life and its evolution will provide context and help understand *Formula One's* current strategies. Public Relations, a pillar of the sport, will be relevant, as managing the sport's image and strategy is crucial. It will permit the *Formula One* team to build their narrative and engage with their fans. As the audience is a key of this research, this chapter will focus on audience engagement and participation on *social media* platforms such as *Instagram*. Understanding how the audience is interested in the content, especially sports content, can provide insight into the effectiveness of the sports communication system in places and conserve the different impacts on the fans concerning loyalty and their behaviour. This chapter will provide a framework and overview of the sports media landscape through different perspectives and current practices. Understanding and analysing sports journalism, storytelling, media narratives, and public relations are essential elements in shaping engagement and audience perceptions.

1.1 Media Life

Defining Media Life nowadays is such a heteroclitic thing with a constantly moving definition. As Mark Deuze (2011) mentioned, our society is a liquid modern society continually searching for ways to adapt and deal with the constant change in every aspect of our lives. Media have become a feature of our everyday lives if not a ubiquitous part of them. Streaming-

-platforms, *social media*, and the internet are different elements that impact our daily lives and how the media world works.

From a general point of view, the term 'Media Life' describes how multiple media technologies, digital platforms, and communication channels influence people's daily lives, social relationships, and cultural experiences in a changing and integrated way. It includes how media technologies have impacted daily activities, the development of human identities, the consumption of information, and societal dynamics, ultimately altering the lines between online and offline spaces. (Van Dijck, 2013:5-18). Strongly linked to this study, the Media Life term -is helping us see how diverse media (streaming, *social media*) are impacting *Formula One* teams' communication on *Instagram*.

So, domestication involves incorporating technologies into our households and adapting and transforming them to align with daily routines, norms, and values. From this perspective, we can observe how media technologies are part of a broader context of Information and Communication Technology (ICTs), which have become inseparable from the rhythms of everyday life (Silverstone & Haddon, 1996: 2-5). From that, we observed that the design and use of these technologies had shaped individual behaviours, social relationships, and, more generally, cultural dynamics, meaning that they impact our society and how we consume and create content. This phenomenon is strongly linked to the content consumed by people and how streaming platform production and diffusion impact external organisations and their communication. They also argued that media technologies are not isolated tools but more integrated components that mediate and influence various aspects of modern life. This contributes to a broader understanding of 'Media Life' as a pervasive integration of media technologies into everyday practices and routines, as we are experiencing nowadays.

Otherwise, Deuze argues that Media Life goes beyond simply using those technologies; it includes how they shape our identities, relationships, perceptions, and experiences. He also highlights several different aspects of Media Life through his work, such as the hybridity that is drawing lines between various forms of media that are currently blurred by the fact that people are engaging in a mix of different activities, such as watching a movie on their laptop while at some point having a conversation on *social media* on their smartphones.

The concept of Media Life is strongly connected to perpetual connectivity by the constant connectivity networks and platforms, allowing instantaneous communication and-

-access to information. The ubiquity of media technologies in our society is accessible and influential in every corner of our lives. For example, we can access our streaming accounts and *social media* wherever we are and want to know if we have an internet connection or just 5G. Deuze also observed another highlight, such as the mobility of the temporary organisation, meaning that traditional temporal boundaries are distributed as media life blurs by the distinction between work and leisure and past and present.

Media Life also impacts our work and identity, approaching how those practices are deeply embedded and anchored in our contemporary society and influence our diverse life aspects. John Lull's work refers to the ubiquitous nature of media today, where individuals engage with media in myriad ways daily (Lull, 2000).

In Media Life, we can hear the word media, which is firmly attached to and liked by the concept of mediatisation. As Nick Couldry and Andreas Hepp discussed and argued in the article "Conceptualising Mediatisation: Contexts, Traditions and Arguments", published in *Communication Theory* in 2013, the concept framed how the media influenced and became an integrated part of our society and culture.

For them, Mediatisation «refers to the increasing influence of media in various dimensions of contemporary life. It is from the perspective of how and where media and communication technologies play a pivotal role in shaping individual experiences, social --interactions, and cultural practices » (Couldry et al., 2013: 191–202.) This concept “suggests that media have become so deeply rooted in modern society that they influence how people perceive reality, form opinions, and engage in everyday activities.” (Hepp et al., 314–324.)

Media Life is also about generating participation and being watched or read; in the case of this study, it is about being watched and involving the concept of participatory culture. Henry Jenkins defined this concept as a “culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement”. For him, cultural shifts are enabled by digital technologies that allow individuals to engage actively in creating, sharing, and consuming media content. (Jenkins, 2006:115-182).

Deuze (2011) states that we are shipping our reality, which can be seen through *social media* consumption. Still, regarding this research, this means that streaming platforms, such as Netflix with the docuseries *Drive to Survive*, are a way to continue to construct our reality-

-toward happened events. We still construct narratives about them and interpret that as our reality, and it is feeding that. (Deuze, 2011:137-148).

Moreover, connected to that Media Life aspect, Castells's "Network Society" is connected to Deuze's Media Life. He emphasises the idea of mediatisation; Castells aligns the digital networks with this idea. For Castells, the network society is the aspect in which the flow of information is being facilitated to circulate through the digital networks, ending in shaping everyday life as said in Media Life. As we can observe nowadays, the media are omnipresent in the daily lives of individuals (Deuze), resulting from the structure and architecture provided by digital networks (Castells, 2011).

As Castell mentions the notion of globalisation through the networks, Deuze, on the other hand, is speaking about the convergence culture perspective. Networks allow for more general and globalised communication, interaction, media content (convert to), and cultural products, and they allow people to share media experiences without geographical boundaries. The convergence perspective is a crucial element of the Network Society and an essential foundation for living the Media Life. The interactivity of Media Life is aligned with the nature of the decentralisation of the Network Society. Both frameworks provide the aspects that the users and individuals of networks are not only passive consumers but are active participants. For Castells, the Network Society is decentralised, which gives society more actors and voices to contribute to the network. For Deuze and Media Life, people can engage interactively with media, creating a particular culture.

The cultural shift and the blurring of boundaries are real issues, as the cultural shifts allowing communication in real-time in the Network Society are impacting and leading to the blurring of boundaries in daily life, as Mark Deuze argues. Integrating media everywhere and into all diverse aspects of our lives dissolves the idea of our 'traditional' distinction between the different activities reflecting the cultural evolution and changes and being driven by networked communication. Engagement and how those connections are meaningful is essential for the sport.

Media Representation of Sport

Throughout *Media Life*, we can observe media representation, mainly focusing on the sports area for this research. *Media Life* comprises narratives that describe events, such as fictional or nonfictional stories, regardless of the media forms. A narrative represents a series of events in a cause-and-effect connection that occurs over time in either virtual or actual space (Media narratives. Media. (n.d.).

Even in the sports field, Commentators, reporters, and athletes are a part of the media narratives.

Sports coverage is linked to high consumption; in other words, it is influenced by how the audience consumes, at which hours, and in what formats (Whannel, 2000 pp. 291-308). For example, in Europe, football is broadcast on television, the “main channel,” because it has a certain notoriety and is considered the national sport, as opposed to Austria, where skiing is transmitted on the national channel and is considered the national sport.

Regarding *Formula One*, the sport studied in this research is broadcasted through private channels in certain countries, such as France, through the *Canal +* private channel. “The institution of sport is related to the media institution regarding television tools, which is a significant provider of revenue but also influences the terms of exchange.” (Whannel, G.-2000) & Bellamy, Robert V. (1989) ‘Professional sports organisations: media strategies’, in L. Wenner (ed.), *Media, Sports and Society*. London: Sage. pp. 120–33.)

Challenges and competition exist in sports and the media, as channels compete to catch the audience, achieving and generating audience figures to attract new programs and the public. “Producing media, especially media messages, requires hierarchy, customisation and narration. However, the main base is the framework of the events for an audience.” (Whannel, G.2000). We can link this quote from Whannel to the research conducted here because, as the content of each *Formula One Grand Prix* is produced and broadcasted, we also have *Netflix* with the *Drive to Survive* docuseries, which is constructed and produced thanks to this *Grand Prix* event. Here, the *Media Life* construct and hierarchy are the primary elements of the streaming platform's docuseries.

However, *Netflix's* streaming network giant needs narratives to construct this docuseries. Regarding the different formats, the narratives and their implications do not interact in the same manner with athletes, competitors, and the audience (Whannel, 2000: 291-308). ‘A best-

-practice' that can be globalised needs to involve some personalisation and drama/ narrative to build audience interest (Lotbiniere, Seymour de 1949: 49). This means that the audience and fans interact differently with the *Grand Prix* being broadcast live than with the docuseries *Drive To Survive*, released after the season ad is closed, usually just before the new season starts. Regarding one of the other parts of the communicative chain, we have the 'Content', and it was suggested that commentary during sports events and games could enhance interest significantly- -if the event is missing "action". (Comiskey et al.; Dolf, 1977: 150–53). Throughout the docuseries, we also have commentaries, interviews, and voiceovers, so this format is being used to generate and continue the communicative chain and keep *Formula One* active through different media and even transmedia narratives.

Throughout his research and relevant to this one, commentaries from the commentators emphasise the impact and effects on the audience and their interpretations (Bryant et al., 1977: 150–53). The aspects of analysing the pleasures of sports watches have yet to be readily interpreted (Duncan & Brummett, 1989: 195–211). Hence, the pleasures and satisfaction of watching a *Grand Prix* or the *Drive to Survive* docuseries are different. (Sapolsky, and Zillman, 1978: 29–30.).

So, through this research, Media Life will be scrutinised, from docuseries to *social media*, so semiotic analysis can help us understand how meanings are created and conveyed through different signs and symbols in sports media and portrayals. Visual analysis may illuminate the visible components employed to communicate particular ideas about athletic activities (Chandler, 2001: 175-206). Using framing theory, one might understand how media narratives highlight some parts of sporting activities while neglecting others. This theory aids in investigating the variables that affect how sporting events are framed in media narratives and how they impact viewers' views. (Entman, 1993: 51-58).

As the *social media* communications of the teams, studying digital culture and new media can show how *social media* and digital platforms affect how sports narratives are created, shared, and consumed and how audiences make these narratives (Jenkins, 2006: 93-130). The ethical implications of media representations of sports, including concerns about sensationalism, privacy, and striking a balance between responsible reporting and entertainment, can be examined using ethical theories as a guide (Banks, 2009: 9-32). Sports media narratives contain underlying ideologies and power structures that can be-

-revealed through critical discourse analysis, demonstrating how these narratives influence public perceptions and uphold prevailing social norms and values (Fairclough,2013: 9-29). Scholars study the content as the sport has become a ‘mass spectacle’. (Whannel, 2000: 291-308). The field of representation of traditions, rituals, media portrayal, media coverage, sports writing, the study of fans, and so on has been scrutinised by scholars.

Therefore, shaping the public perception and engagement that media represents is essential; the audience’s preferences lead to the prioritised formats on TV, and the relationship between sport and coverage, especially in television, is a beneficial and mutual partnership aiming to generate revenue and audience.

Furthermore, the well-known illustration for *Formula One* is the docuseries *Drive To Survive* on the *Netflix* platform. It illustrates that modern media work can create a narrative to engage an audience's interest in motorsport and attract new ones; it is balanced to maintain interest and generate it, as Mohraim. A (2024) declared in her interview that the docuseries format gives the audience different experiences and is enhanced by the interviews.

When speaking about Media Life, we have to connect sports journalism to the media narratives through media narratives and storytelling. As sports journalism is deeply rooted and connected to media narratives and storytelling, it also shapes how and how the stories are presented to the public. Usually, it highlights certain aspects that influence public perceptions. Deciding which stories will be covered or which sport will be favoured to be covered or broadcast induces public discussion and importance (perception).

A limb of journalism known as "sports journalism" is devoted to covering and evaluating news, events, and issues related to sports. Some of the subjects sports journalists cover include athlete bios, team dynamics, game results, sports business, and sports' broader cultural and societal effects. This field entails obtaining, writing, editing, and presenting sports-related content to educate and attract audiences. (Hardin, Shain, & Shultz-Poniatowski, ,2008: 68-79).

However, "Sports storytelling” involves using narrative techniques and compelling storytelling methods to convey the human drama, emotion, and significance behind sports events and experiences (Billings et al., 2010: 281–298). So, Sports stories get more relatable and captivating when told in a way that goes beyond simple reporting to captivate and resonate-

-with readers, viewers, and listeners. (Hardin & Whiteside, 2017: 676–698). As Matsiola, Spiliopoulos, and Tsigilis (2022) spoke about the term Digital Storytelling, the aim is to tell a story, and digital resources and tools are used for it. Moreover, it is linked to journalism and media, referring to various innovative narrative formats. So, the different new platforms going, from *social media* platforms to streaming platforms, create and allow new forms of “journalism and introduce new ways to produce and tell narratives.” This was allowed by combining journalism with the new media (Matsiola et al., 2022: 51).

Nowadays, sports are considered a big business. Still, now that the “screen industry” is attracted by that, streaming platforms such as *Netflix* are producing different docuseries on sports; with the success of the first formats of *Drive to Survive (Formula One sports)*, they are producing more docuseries narrated on sports such as golf with *Swing* or even *Nascar*.

Overall, sports journalism is moving from encompassing the analysis of sports events related to or new to covering different events, which encompasses the dynamic of the team, the results of games/ races, and what is related to the athletes; in other words, the broader cultural and societal impact of sport. The considered « traditional coverage » or reporting is being completed by adding sports storytelling, involving some narrative techniques to bring and convey some drum and generate emotion behind the sports and events, trying to make them more attractive and engaging for the audiences.

Social Media and Network Society

It is essential to understand that *social media* is the foundation. One scholar who studied it has significantly studied the role of social networks and their place in shaping behaviours and our society. By learning how the networks are shaping our contemporary societies by his concept of the “network society”. Castells observed different concepts from the “Rise of the Network Society” (1996). The first one is the *Network Society*; for him, it is the idea of a network society as a social structure that designates the dominance of networks, especially the information networks, in shaping our society. He observed that information and communication technologies (ICTs) have a ubiquitous influence on many sectors, including politics, economy, and culture. The pervasive influence of information and communication characterises the network society. (Castells, 2011: 355-407).

He also speaks about the network individual, which is the concept that emphasises and highlights how individuals are increasingly connected through various and diverse networks, on the one hand, online and offline. For him, the networked individual can establish and engage in many networks, which shapes the networked individual's identity, relationships, and information-gathering abilities. Castells coined the term "rise of information" to characterise network society's economic structure, in which knowledge and information are essential to output and wealth generation. (Castells, 2011: 77-163). It represents a transposition from industrialism to an economy where information generation, processing, and distribution are critical for economic success. Advances in ICTs facilitate this shift. He acknowledges that technologies have transformative power and impact society, structuring and shaping it. However, he is not deterministic because he emphasises the 'interplay between technology and society'. This can be linked to this research because of technology's impact on social structure and how audiences perceive and consume *Formula One*. He observed how different technologies, especially ICT, are tools that enable flexible specialisation in post economies. This allows for adaptation and customisation, contributing to economic restructuring. (Castells, 2011: 135-147).

Society is known for not being obedient and resistant, and Castells explored this aspect through the power and resistance of network society. The element observed in the forum is that power is decentralised and distributed across various nodes, becoming a vital site for exercising power. For example, for social movements and exercising leadership, the network can leverage and challenge a known and in-place power through our societal structures and bring social and societal change. Global flows of information, capital, and culture characterise network society. This has implications for constructing our societal identities, which are shaped by local and global influences. Thanks to technology, especially ICTs, the economy can accommodate flexible specialisation. This facilitates the modification and adjustment of production procedures, aiding economic restructuring. (Castells, 2011: 407-460).

Sports Fan Engagement

Regarding sports, each sport has fans and audiences, and the one studied is *Formula One*. First of all, the term fan needs to be observed and defined. In sports, "fans" refer to individuals or groups with a solid emotional and often loyal attachment to a particular sport-

-team, athlete, or sport (Funk & James, 2001: 377-400). Furthermore, fans demonstrate their support through various means, including attending games, watching matches on television, wearing team merchandise, and engaging in discussions about the sport (Wann et al., 2001: 23-123).

Sports fans can range from casual observers to die-hard enthusiasts, and their level of involvement can vary widely. (Bee, & Kahle, 2006: 36-53). Without fans in *Formula One*, the sport would not be the same, not only because of the cheerful events but also because of the financial rewards. For Hunt et al. (1999), fans represent an emotional connection with the sports object, meaning that it is an emotional connection with the team or athlete. (Hunt, Bristol and Bashaw, 1999: 439–452.). As fans are considered emotionally involved, they invest resources (meaning financial resources) in supporting their teams/athletes. (Wann et al., 2001: 23-123). Fans are not only present in sports but are also known as being committed and passionate about a sports team or club. (Vallerand, et al. ,2008: 1279-1293).

Throughout this research, it is vital to understand that the audience and fans are also pillars and that it is essential to understand their role in this sphere. The “facet” of the fan can have a marketing aspect, as Cohen argued that fans could be seen as customers. (Cohen,1996: 30-31). Fans are in a relationship with the team or athletes they support, meaning they follow them on social networks and try to gain insight into their lives by different means (newspapers, books, the internet..., etc.). The team is likely to benefit from this relationship. (Funk & James, 2001:377-400). Fan engagement is essential as the sports industry generates considerable revenue (McCaffrey, 2019: 483-495).

Regarding fan engagement, a different aspect of this term has been studied by scholars: the marketing aspect, especially regarding customer engagement. (Hüttermann,2021: 2-14). More generally, as defined across the discipline, fan engagement can be regarded as an interaction and a relationship that is ‘lasting’ in time. (Kumar et al., 2010: 297-310).

As *Formula One* is an expensive sport, fans are the key to its financial survival; with customer engagement toward the mark, it will be easier for the fool to persist through the years. Customer engagement is the continuous and interactive bond between sports teams and their supporters or viewers. (Kumar et al., 2010: 297-310). It refers to how fans and sports organisations communicate, connect, and build community.

Also, as the *Formula One* sport is happening on three days, for 24 weekends, in different countries and cities each time, they have high expectations of the fan's participation in events, merchandise... So, participating in fan events, acquiring merchandise, attending games, and interacting on *social media* are all examples of customer engagement in sports. The objective - is to cultivate a committed and deeply engaged fan base that provides financial and advocacy support to the team or organisation. (Sutton, McDonald, Milne, & Cimperman, 1997: 15-22).

Overall, the relationship between fan behaviour and the media they are exposed to is essential to successful sports such as *Formula One*. Even if different categories of fans exist, going from casual fans to die-hard fans, they can support the sport in different ways, such as by assisting in a race, making merchandise purchases, or interacting and engaging on *social media*. The fan's investment in the sport is an emotional and final aspect that is crucial and vital. As the scholars observed and highlighted, this implies building a long-lasting relationship between the two parties involved, the fans and the sports organisation. To foster a committed fan base, this engagement benefits the organisation and team by providing the support needed for the growth and sustainability of the organisation and team, as well as financial support and advocacy of the sport.

Finally, Social and Cultural Implications impact the role of Media in Shaping Sporting Identities and Communities. There is no action without cause and effect. So, sports media have cultural implications, such as changes in health care, education, social behaviours, and human capital productivity (Taylor et al.; W., 2015: 47-65). This research aims to see the impact of the *Drive to Survive* docuseries on *Formula One* sport and how the team communicates. This is not only for the communicating part but also for the implication that it is succeeding in the cultural sphere. For example, the impact on how streaming is produced nowadays, how the audiences are consuming and receiving the different contents, and which ones are favoured. Before going depthless, we may need to define "*sport*" as a competitive, organised physical or mental activity recognised locally, nationally, or worldwide. Official organisations frequently oversee it and have clear rules and objectives.

Athletes, games, workouts, and leisure activities that require individual or team participation are all included in the broad sports category. "Sports suit many things, including competition, friendliness, physical fitness, and entertainment" (Coakley, 2021: 25-44).

Linking to this developed part, we have the terms of culture; culture is also a broad term relative to the arts, heritage, traditions, behaviours, practices, and collective identity shaping our society. Culture evolves and is influenced by external factors such as history, religion, geography and social structures. (Geertz, C., 1973). &(Kroeber, & Kluckhohn, 1952: 11-35). The term culture also encompasses the term media. Media can refer to cultural values, norms, and societal beliefs (Taylor et al., 2015: 47-65).

The media narratives are also powerful tools for attracting and keeping an audience; narratives capture the essence of events and shape narratives of cultural identities. Technological advancements and the widespread availability of digital media have broadened the reach and impact of sports media. Fans now interact with sports in new ways and contribute to the conversation about the game thanks to *social media*, streaming services, and interactive content. The development of fan communities and the maintenance of both individual and group sporting identities are two more ways that the media affects sports. Through media platforms, fans communicate, connect, and create shared identities. (Taylor et al. 2015: 47-65). As can be observed with *Formula One* sport, the *Drive to Survive* docuseries have attracted a new audience and given a new way to *consume Formula One* that can be considered different from the previous ‘traditional’ way known.

One another aspect that he aborded and strongly linked to this research is the ‘*media rituals*’ This concept involves understanding how individuals interact, making a part of their lives with the media, and integrating it into their daily lives and routines to make it a practice. The aspects related to that for him are the daily routines and habits, meaning how people incorporate media consumption into daily lives to make it natural and a part of their routine activities. The other aspect is that media consumption is personalised based on the individual’s preferences. The individual curates their media experience to align it to what they like and create a sort of second world, creating comfort and a sense of familiarity. Social connectivity is linked to individual practice and social activities, such as shared media experiences or just exchanging about one thing shown on TV. This contributes to building social connectivity and a particular formation of communities.

In the Media Life, the cultural and seasonal rituals can be an influence. Because as cultural events and seasons are happening, ads, for example, the *Super Bowl* event each year or the first race of *Formula One* happening each year at the same period, can become a cultural- and seasonal media ritual. Finally, the media consumed by people can be a form of self-

-expression and identity construction by contributing to how individuals self-present themselves, their identity, and how they currently perceive the world and their identity through the content they have been engaging with.

Overall, the media's role in the identities of sports is more profound than the simple fact of coverage and reporting; it influences the behaviour (individually), their practices, and the influences on culture and society. As we can observe through the docuseries *Drive to Survive*, which is about *Formula One*, the illustrations of the media's role in shaping sporting identities are far from the coverage. *Formula One* illustrates the impact of transformation, how the audiences consume content and how they act and interact with sports content. *Drive to Survive* is the perfect illustration that the formats have attracted and branded a new audience to *Formula One* but also changed the manner of sports consumption, moving away from what is considered the 'traditional viewing methods'.

1.2 Public Relations

Sports Public Relations

Nowadays, Public Relations touches every field. As the discipline is considered multifaceted, it plays a crucial role in the interactions between organisations and their audiences. Furthermore, to fully understand the meaning of this term, we must address and consider the scholarly perspectives already available about the strategies' importance and ethical dimensions. One scholar who provided an understandable definition was J.G Hutton: "Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organisations and their publics." (Hutton et al., 1999: 199-214).

Moreover, from his perspective, this is more of a management function between managing the communication between different parties, such as the organisations and the shareholders, for better credibility, understatement, and reliability. His approach can be considered holistic, integrating different communication tools and strategies to create consistent and coherent communication and a message that supports the organisation's goals. However, that is also a benefit to the long-term reputation.

James E. Grunig and Todd Hunt, one of his scholar's colleagues, similarly approach the term. For them, it is also about managing communication between the public and organisations. Furthermore, through that definition, they have introduced the four models of PR (Public-

-Relations): The “press agency, public information, that is a two asymmetric, and two ways detrital each of them representing different approaches to managed the relationships and communications”. Moreover, the excellence in PR emphasises the two symmetrical ways of communication to construct a mutual relationship. (Grunig & Hunt, 1984: 3-77).

Those theories can be observed in the current research through the team, platforms and sponsors working and functioning together to be closer and foster a community to make benefits. On the other hand, Public Relations are also a management aspect, but they establish and maintain beneficial relationships for the implied parts. They emphasise and focus on the role of PR in achieving the organisational objectives and the positive building image delivered to the public (Cutlip et al., 2006). So, the term public relations (PR) implies that PR manages the communications between different parts of an organisation and its public. The principal aim of public relations is to communicate and build a message that benefits and promotes a positive image, manage the petition, and foster loyalty.

Public Relations are a linchpin in sports communication, managing the image and communication of sports organisations, including athletes, teams, and events. PR also plays a pivotal role in engaging with fans, marketing, and crisis management in sports. Hutton's concepts underscore the importance of aligning PR strategies with fan expectations to foster long-term relationships (Hutton, 1999: 199–214). The relationship with the fans can be defined through Gruning and Hunt's model. The two-way symmetrical communication model is often utilised to engage with fans to generate and foster dialogue and group mutual benefits. (Grunig, & Hunt, 1984).

The historical evolution of PR in sports communication was historically made through traditional press, like the newspaper and TV. It started with "traditional media" to translate to digital platforms. Those digital platforms have transformed public relations and changed how PR strategies are used globally and in the sport. Nowadays, Public Relations usually integrates different digital channels to create campaigns; through that, the campaigns can provide advanced analytics that are tools for measuring the strengths and how the strategies campaigns are effective in terms of Public Relations (rates engagement, shares comments, traffic...). Furthermore, it allows tracking return on investment (ROI) (Wright et al., 2015: 1-26).

Overall, to have a manageable ecosystem between the different sports organisation and their audiences, Public Relations is essential to fostering a beneficial relationship between the-

-two involved parties. As observed, PR plays an essential role in fostering the community, maintaining relationships and maintaining it. Scholars such as Hutton describe it as an essential and strategic process that enhances the reputation and credibility of the term reputation (Hutton, 1999: 199-214).

Managing all these aspects effectively requires strategies that align with the diverse aims of fostering long-term loyalty and relationships and meeting the expectations of various stakeholders (Hutton, 1999: 199-214). To conclude, Public Relations in sports are adapting to the transformation of the media landscape to manage a positive image and engage with fans, as digital platforms are constantly evolving and transforming the field. It is crucial to remember that public relations is the cornerstone of sports communications, ensuring a positive and meaningful brand image for the audience.

PR Strategies for Audience Engagement

Regarding *social media*, we must discuss engagement and observe public relations strategies to engage the audience. Public relations strategies for audience engagement, especially in the Sports areas, are about building and fostering positive relationships between the parties involved, creating attractive content, and using *social media* effectively.

For Ledingham & Bruning (1998), public relations strategies must focus on their audience's needs, such as what they prefer and the different behaviours for a consequential engagement. Their theory is that public relations management asserts maintenance, which is at the origin of the built relations with the different publics and is a key and pillar element of the personality of a company or organisation (Ledingham & Bruning, 1998: 55-65).

To be efficient and effective, public relations must be segmented based on different factors, such as demographics, tailored behaviours, and geopolitical factors. It was established that relationships with the audience should always be focused on the long-term building relationships rather than alone focusing on short-term goals, a favourite interactive content creation. The social presence theory established that the discerned presence of concurrents or others in *social media* interactions impacts and influences the following areas of relationship development (Kiesler et al., 1984: 1123).

So, *social media* public relations strategies to engage with the audience are essential. Public relations strategies for audience engagement in sports are about building and fostering positive relationships between the parties involved, such as effectively obtaining attractive and creative content and using *social media* tools.

To be efficient and effective, public relations must consider several variables, including geopolitical issues, customised behaviours, and demographics. Building relationships with the audience should prioritise creating interactive content over short-term objectives and long-term involvement. According to social presence theory, relationship formation is greatly influenced by how others are perceived to be present during *social media* interactions. (Kiesler, Siegel, & McGuire, 1984: 1123).

Measuring PR Success

Acknowledging and measuring the success of any strategy is essential for improving it, and that is especially true in Public Relations strategies. Each company has used qualitative and quantitative metrics to improve, change, and address effectiveness. Even market organisations can have a point of view on their different campaigns and the impacts of their PR on audience engagement, including the different goals established by the company and the brand reputation.

One of the known theories is the Excellence theory, which upholds the crucial role of organised communication management in producing excellent PR and contributing to its original success and effectiveness. (Grunig, 2013). This theory provides a way to evaluate the effectiveness of PR on organisational goals.

Using an average method to measure the effectiveness of PR strategies allows the organisation to have accurate approaches and strategies and to achieve or be closer to achieving their communication goals. Measuring Public relations success is essential to be able to be improved. The different organisations can use qualitative and quantitative metrics to assess the effectiveness, audience engagement and brand reputation. As the Excellence Theory helps, organised communication is essential for successful public relations. (Grunig, 2013). Public relations initiatives are evaluated using Macnamara's PREM methodology, which considers input, output, outcome, and effect (Macnamara, 2017). The Barcelona Principles, which-

-emphasise objectives, results, and uniform procedures, standardise PR measurement (Jakus, 2018; Rockland, 2015). ROI integrates PR and financial measures for cost-effectiveness (Watson et al., 2011). According to Phillips and Young (2009) and Stoldt et al. (2020), other KPIs include audience involvement, brand perception, *social media*, and media coverage. Precise assessment enhances communication objectives and public relations plans.

Chapter II-Digital Platforms and Social Media in Sports

This chapter will provide and explore the theoretical foundation of *social media* and also consider its historical context—the last one concerns sports and the different concepts that spin the communities' digital fandoms online. The part parody cultural concept emerging from the media coverage will be observed in the sports area. We will also mention athlete branding, marketing strategies, and public relations through *social media* communication that encompasses and engages brand loyalty and extends fan interaction and brand identity. Throughout this chapter, the different analyses will explain how *social media* has changed sports communication and engagement with new audiences, allowing them to have a broader impact, such as on sports marketing.

This in-depth investigation of the convergence chapter aims to explain how disparate components interact to produce integrated and improved experiences in various industries. As we read through this chapter, we will also learn about the forces driving convergence and how it could affect how people connect and communicate in the future. By providing a framework of convergence going from context to the theoretical framework and their different impact on the various sectors, we will be able to examine the different convergence influences of *social media* and sports communication and give a height on the *Formula One* technique used on Instagram to be able to reach and examen to a new audience. Throughout the approach, we will examine the multifaceted aspect of convergence and how it applies in the sports media.

2.1 Convergence

As the 21st century is chiefly a digital age, the convergence of technology, culture, and media is essential to observe, especially in sports fields, to better understand how sports-organisations (such as *Formula One*) engage with their audiences. When discussing media convergence, we refer to diverse processes, such as the media, platforms, and technologies-implemented to improve and enhance the user experience. This integration process blurs the lines between digital and traditional media, making access more accessible and seamless. For example, we can move from a paper magazine to its *social media* as fast as we want and interact seamlessly through different platforms.

The convergence aspect concerns different dimensions, starting with the cultural dimensions and encompassing the industrial and technological dimensions. The Convergence in the sports industry has changed how sports organisations interact with their fans and athletes. By combining traditional media (television and print press) with digital media platforms nowadays, sports organisations can create a more extended communication that is also personalised and interactive, enhancing the sense of community and fostering a feeling of appurtenance (Jenkins, H.2006).

Different and specific numbers of scholars have spoken and studied the convergence phenomenon. One of the known authors of this is Henry Jenkins with the Convergence Culture theory. For him, the convergence is about a cultural shift where the user is asked and encouraged to search for and consult the information he wants by connecting through different media content, including traditional and digital media. This convergence includes changes in the relationship between industries, markets, and audiences. The convergence process is driven by bottom-up consumer demand and top-down corporate drive. (Jenkins, 2006: 252-336).

As Terry Flew (2008) highlighted: “Media convergence refers to the process whereby new technologies are accommodated by existing media and communication industries and cultures, as well as the process whereby the new technologies adapt to the conventions, logics, and habits of existing media forms and industries.” (Flew, T. (2007). *New Media: An Introduction* (pp. 20). Oxford University Press.) Another observed aspect is technological convergence, as Tom Dwyer highlighted. For him, combining our ways of communication, such as broadcast and paper communication, which were separate technologies from each other, became a single system, producing a new way of consuming the media and communicating (Dwyer, 2010: 5-67).

‘Technological convergence refers to the tendency for different technological systems to evolve toward performing similar tasks. This convergence leads to blending media, computing, and telecommunications into one integrated system.’ (Dwyer, T. (2010). *Media convergence*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK), p8.).

Industry convergence is enhanced by media companies often collaborating across different fields, using the new technology offered by technologies to reach the most users possible. Kung, Picard, and Towse emphasise this field because the industries tend to merge and overlap.

“Industry convergence is the trend where distinct industries such as telecommunications, computing, and traditional media become increasingly overlapping in content, services, and infrastructure, driven by digital technology and changing consumer behaviour.” (Küng, L., Picard, R. G., & Towse, R. (Eds.). (2008). *The internet and the mass media*. Sage, p 50.)

In the sports industry, how fans are engaged in the sport has completely changed, as well as how organisations engage with them and how the fans experience sport; this integration of digital media and platforms has allowed fan engagement in real-time through various digital points. The leverage of those platforms also allows human resource sports organisations to reach a broader global audience, “blurring” the geographical barriers and expanding the fanbase. The personalised experience through data collection will enable us to be more aware of fan behaviours and preferences, generating a new revenue stream.

Moreover, the importance of media convergence in the 21st century, especially concerning the sport industry, is examining the impacts on audience engagement and the relationship between the different factors: cultures, industries, and technologies.

Entertainment and Sport Convergence

Jenkins (2006) illuminates that the fusion of new and traditional media transforms passive viewers into active participants in this era of media convergence. This interaction creates a participatory culture where consumers also become content creators. Media storytelling, broadcasted through different old platforms, extends and builds the narrative. In the sports sphere of *Formula One*, one event, such as a *Grand Prix*, can be broadcast on TV and covered in real-time through *social media* and behind the scenes.

When speaking about entertainment, we must understand what it means clearly. The scholars Zillmann and Bryant (1994) defined entertainment as anything that seeks to relax and, to some extent, share other people's stories and demonstrate one's or other people's unique talents. (Zillmann et al., J. 1994: 437-461). Entertainment can be framed as an experience where viewers need lucrativeness (Bates & Ferri, 2010: 1-20). Moreover, in the modern digital era, the convergence of entertainment and sports media represents a new, dynamic, and transformative landscape. This landscape has shaped how sports are consumed and experienced and how fans consume and interact with them.

However, we must mention the financial and commercial benefits of nment and sports convergence's commercial aims and benefits as essential and non-forgettable leverage in entertainment preferences on how brands will make the consumer participate and try to affect him through emotional or cultural means. A key element in this marketing creativity is using the famousness of athletes or teams. (Gabler 1998) & (Hackley & Hackley, 2017: 9-25).

Nowadays, technologies can be considered the medium or moderator of the relationship between sports media consumption and its audience. (Lopez-Gonzalez & Griffiths, 2018: 807-823). This means that consumers 'traditional' platforms, such as billboards, magazine advertising, and so on, have migrated to digital platforms, developing and fostering innovative strategies and expanding reach. (Kahle, & Riley, 2004: 297-365). *Social media* serves as a central hub for digital fan communities. These online communities enable enthusiasts to share their enthusiasm and experiences and are frequently built around sports teams, athletes, or particular events. (Gantz, & Wenner,2017).

Overall, as Jenkins's theory established, the sports sphere illustrates the convergence theory because the industry successfully merges its 'traditional media' with the new digital media and has produced a participatory culture, making the receptor audience also a creator. To understand who the audience is engaging with the sport from different *social media* platforms and players, the user and gratification, explain the theory that audiences are driven by their identity; they want social integration but also a want diversion. *Social media's* role is crucial as it is the foundation for building fan communities. This convergence has changed the production and consumption of sports by giving the industry new innovative strategies.

Corporation Convergence

Research has scrutinised corporate convergence, which is defined as the confluence and merging of potential interests and the combination of telecommunication, the entertainment industry, and media companies. As Nwammuo and Nwafor (2019) established, thanks to corporate convergence, we can identify two types of convergence: proprietary and organisational. Furthermore, those are in a close relationship. (Nwamu & Nwafor, 2019: 55-67).

Regarding *social media*, corporate convergence refers to an alignment strategy involving organisations and businesses from diverse industries to exploit and use *social media* in different fields, such as customer engagement, brand promotion, and communication. Creating a unified and powerful *social media* presence entails integrating various corporate departments and functions. (Chaffey, & Ellis-Chadwick, 2012: 2-24). & (Scott, 2015: 15-24). Digitalisation has led to the convergence of media channels, thereby establishing connections between market segments and creating a potent environment for intertextually connecting brands (Powell, 2013: 21-51).

The digital convergence experienced nowadays can be defined simply by combining different information, media and devices. It can be defined as the incorporation and combination of industries (Taylor, 2022). This convergence implies cross-channel consistency, as the user experience through different platforms provides a unified and consistent image (Chakraborty & Jain, 2022: 281-305). When a cohesive content strategy is developed for all platforms, the content complements and reinforces the brand's message and goals, creating content synergy across the platforms. As Boyle & Haynes (2002) claimed, in the media era/ age, our imagination is the only limitation and border limiting us, as we can consume content from everywhere and from many different devices. (Boyle & Haynes, 2002: 96-114).

Their approach regarding convergence and sport is that the different media, such as telecommunication, data communication and mass media communication, are fully integrated into delivering the media content. Regarding the convergence of sports, convergence has ultimately impacted the three sectors of mass media communication, telecommunication, and data (Boyle & Haynes, 2002: 96-114). The media convergence of platforms in sports can be seen as a fact that platforms are embracing and merging with the new opportunities of the media landscape

Convergence, Sport and Social Media

Multiplying content delivery through different *social media* platforms is vital for *Formula One* content, as it is a supplementary way to market and promote sports highlights, behind-the-scenes footage, and interviews. Those different platforms are a pillar for providing fans with diverse content, allowing them to reach many more people and transcend the country's frontiers. (Meikle, & Young, 2017: 35-79).

The convergence is also touched by the user-generated content and the participatory culture allowed by *social media*. The different teams of *Formula One* can create and generate their own content about memes and analyses of races and fan fiction or art. This participatory engagement enhances the participatory culture and fan engagement as fans constitute a significant part of the content ecosystem, allowing them to feel more connected through the sport's content. (Jenkins, 2006).

The real-time engagement and constant interaction allowed by *social media* connect and make the fans interact, as well as the drivers and the team. As we can observe through the events, the teams are communicating in actual times through different platforms and from various perspectives: on *Instagram*, they can use the tool of posts to interact as a game with the fans, through Twitter with small and minor texts, as *Youtube* or *Instagram* can use a streaming platform during races. Through those, fans feel more connected and are not passive as they are involved. (Billings, Hardin, & Brown, 2014: 1-3).

The monetisation and marketing opportunities are allowed through advertising and sponsorship as *social media* offers features for advertising and sponsorship for *Formula One*. Enabling the brand partnership with influencers, teams, and drivers will increase the brand's revenue and visibility. (Rowe, 2012: 46-151). We can also observe consumer sales and merchandising as we can see the *Formula One* team and the *FIA organisation (Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile)* are using the tools to promote events, tick but also different packages to fans to have access to specific and exclusive content through the subscriptions., enhancing the revenue but also the fan engagement and loyalties. (Billings, Hardin, & -Brown,2014: 1-3). Through technological innovation and integration, live streaming and video content allowed by *social media* enhance *the Formula One* live stream and provide fans with more diverse content that goes beyond the race of traditional broadcasting. (Hutchins & Rowe, 2012: 46-90).

Nevertheless, through all this convergence, some challenges and considerations are arising, such as privacy and data security; user data, even in *Formula One* sport, is a concern and an issue that needs to be navigated to keep the fan's trust. (Flew, 2007: 27). The issue of authenticity through commercialisation is an issue as different *social media* offer opportunities; the *Formula One* organisation needs to stay and avoid commercials of the sport to keep the-

-fans' interest. (Jenkins, 2006). The convergence of *social media*, particularly in the sports industry and focusing on *Formula One*, demonstrates how traditional, digital, and technological media are integrated to create a unique communication strategy to engage participants and fans.

2.2 Social Media

This study is strongly linked to *social media*, as the digital platforms observed are the *Instagram* accounts of two *Formula One* team members. So, it could benefit from definition and a broader knowledge landscape. *Social media* is a platform on the web that allows users to interact with each other and share content. For Boyd and Ellison, *social media* refers to digital web-based tools, applications, and platforms that enable users to create, share, export content, communicate in real-time, and create online communities. “Within those digital spaces is a factor of encouragement of diverse online social interactions by allowing people and organisations to collaborate, engage, and produce content of their own.” (Boyd & Ellison, 2007: 210-230.)

The term ‘*Social media*’ (abbreviation *SM*) was first used in 1994 in Tokyo, Japan. It was the period of the development of technology and the early days of technology. (Aichner, Grünfelder, Maurer, & Jegeni, 2021: 215-222). The first social networking site was considered to be *classmates.com* in 1995 (Dhingra et al.; 2019: 1-7). This website allowed the users to personalise their profile and list their friends, an early view of the Facebook we know. (Winder, 2007: 238,23). The year 2000 can be seen as the ‘Golden Age’ of *social media*, as the internet expanded and the field of *social media* continued. The term *social network* has come to light from *social media*. Even if the terms are very close and straightforward, is there a slight difference between them. A *social network* can also be an application or website that allows-users to communicate by posting posts or messages. For instance, *TikTok* and *Instagram* can be considered *social media* instead of *LinkedIn*, which can be considered *social networking*.

In this research, the chosen platform is *Instagram*. A *Statista* graph and study ranked the most widespread *social networks* worldwide in January 2024 by the number of monthly active users. *Facebook* was ranked fourth most used per month, with 2,000 million users. The leader is still *Facebook*, with 3 049 million users per month; the data can be explained because this platform is generally used in Africa, and companies sometimes need to organise content for-

-*Instagram* platforms. The second platform is *YouTube*, with 2 491 million monthly users, and *WhatsApp* is at the same level as *Instagram*, with 2,000 million monthly users. (Biggest *social media platforms 2024* | *Statista*. (2024, February 2).

To summarise, the transformation of communication, especially the evolution of *social media*, is based on and born from the different stages and language platforms we use nowadays and their implications changing how we communicate and share content. As the researchers Boyd and Ellison said, *social media* allows us to share and communicate in real time with online communities that foster different social interactions. Still, nowadays, contemporary platforms such as *Instagram* illustrate the shift in digital engagement and user-generated content. This context and historical perspective are crucial to understanding how different digital platforms shape communication, especially the strategies of the *Formula One* team on *Instagram* because they impact their interaction and audience engagement.

The Theoretical Foundations of Social Media

The digital age has made it harder to understand the interplays between technology and society, as *social media* platforms influence and are also influenced by society.

The theoretical foundation of the intricate relationship between society and *social media* is crucial. By exploring Social Construction Technology and related theories, we will gain insight into how platforms are shaped, social dynamics are generated, and user behaviours are shaped.

Part of the foundations of *social media* is the social construction of technology (SCOT). This theoretical framework explores how the way technologies are not merely neutral objects but are socially shaped and constructed through the interactions of various stakeholders. Scholars like Wiebe, Bijker and Trevor Pinch have contributed significantly to the development and application of SCOT. Here are vital aspects to consider when exploring SCOT in the context of *social media* platform participants.

The user gratification theory is another aspect and part of the foundation of *social media*. The influential scholars Katz and Blumler studied the uses and gratifications theory, which is a theory regarding communication focused on how individuals are active and use *social media* to satisfy needs and wants. The theory implies that individuals choose from intentional desires and intentions and that this choice of media consumption is based on gratifications. Scholars have-

-identified key gratifications that can be applied to the *social media* sphere studied here. The information-seeking of individuals by using media, especially *social media*, is merely to satisfy their curiosity. Keeping themselves informed about a multitude of topics, and this aspect is linked to the *social media* sphere, is that users require *social media* platforms, such as *Instagram*, to stay aware of what is currently happening regarding numerous topics and events, as well as regarding industry or even the hobbies and proper interests of the person. So, gratification is derived from acquiring relevant and exciting information for individuals and linked to this research on how the audience engages with *social media* and athlete branding. The user gratifications theory is that the audience is searching for specific media to satisfy a need or even gratifications, which can be information, social interaction, escapism, or entertainment.

For this research, the gratification theory is relevant because, through the *Instagram* of each team competing in *Formula One*, we observe that fans and followers tend to express their feelings about this concerned publication under the publications. So, gratification is coming and belonging to the feeling and sense of belonging and being integrated. (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973: 509-523). The gratification of entertainment linked to *social media* is that they are choosing to engage with *social media* platforms, here *Instagram*, to be informed but also documented and to share their different experiences by creating ‘narratives of their lives.’ The gratification from entertainment is similar to the previous one and comes from the feeling of self-expression, enjoyment, and amusement.

As this study is regarding a docuseries from the *Netflix* platform and a cultural aspect, it is essential to mention cultural studies and cultural imperialism. As Stuart Hall studied and argued, cultural studies examine and analyse cultural content's production, consumption, and distribution, highlighting the real significance of understanding the power generated by relations, representation, and identity. In his work, Hall highlights and emphasises that the cultural dynamic is based on and concentrates on diverse social groups. (Hall, 2016: 180-206). Herbert Schiller studied cultural imperialism, which refers to the domination and sovereignty of a culture over another considered more powerful and prosperous. For him, this refers to the communication and media aspects that play a crucial role in spreading the norms and values of the dominant culture. (Schiller, 1978: 269-281).

Regarding the cultural dimensions of *social media*, the representation aspect generates the issue that platforms perpetuate “stereotypical” representations. Platforms also reinforce the existing-

-power in place and structures by being marginalised. Through their content generation, users contribute to the construction of representations, but what is emphasised and visible also depends on algorithms and platform design.

The influence of the dominant culture regarding *social media* is biased by the algorithm that, without wanting, inadvertently may amplify content aligned with the norms of the dominant cultures, limiting and occulting visibility or other alternatives. The worldwide reach of dominant cultural products on *social media* may be eclipsed by diverse local expressions, which could lead to cultural homogenisation.

Hall and Schiller's ideas have shaped *social media's* cultural aspects, emphasising the intricate relationship between identity, power, and representation in virtual environments. A more inclusive and fair global communication landscape on *social media* requires recognising and resolving the challenges of cultural imperialism and elevating various viewpoints.

The other angle to consider is Platform theory. Platform theory is regarded as an interdisciplinary theoretical framework investigating digital platform dynamics. (Parker, Van Alstyne, & Choudary, 2016: 21-41). This research is strongly tied to *Formula One* sport, the study on the streaming platform *Netflix*, and the *social media* sphere. This angle has different key concepts, such as the platform ecosystem, which includes other actors: users, developers, and partners (Gawer & Cusumano, 2014: 417-433). The second aspect is the network effects, which the platform theory examines. It analyses this dynamic, in which a platform's value increases as users interact with and join it (Benkler, 2017: 375). Lastly, user engagement and participation refers to how users interact with and contribute to the platform's 'ecosystems'.

The Economic theory regarding *social media* is defined as the application of economics to framework and analyse the economics of *social media* platforms, which means how the economy is in the *social media* sphere. Data monetisation examines the methods used by *social media* companies to gather and sell user data, and there are concerns about data privacy, user-consent, and data sales to outside parties. (Marshall & Shipman, 2015: 712-723). Economics theories also examine platform competition discussion, market power, antitrust concerns, entry barriers, and other aspects of competition on *social media* platforms. (Hofmann, Katzenbach, & Gollatz, 2017: 1406-1423).

As mentioned, *social media* is encompassed by technologies and innovations. An aspect of the foundations of *social media* theories is innovation. (Chesbrough, & Di Minin, 2014: 301-315).

Innovation theories surround how *social media* evolves, innovates, and disrupts existing technologies. This theory analyses the innovation process and its outcomes in the *social media* framework. Disruptive innovation theory investigates how *social media* platforms can back up established industries and business models. (Vargo, & Shaw, 2015: pp. 39). Lastly, for this section, we have the *social media* effect theory, which explores the consequences of *social media*: its use by and on individuals. Some key concepts have been identified by known scholars, such as Information Flow and Dissemination, which encompass the impact of algorithms, virality, and echo chambers on the information landscape. (Papacharissi, 2010: 291-304). Overall, this research's theoretical foundations of *social media* give us an understanding framework that will allow us to analyse their impacts and influence on society.

Digital Platforms in Sport

The rise of digital platforms has impacted all industries, and sports is no exception. As this study shows, the rise of digital platforms has impacted the *Formula One* field as organisations communicate and work by creating new employment in the industry and other industries. Enhance this phenomenon with the *Drive to Survive* series. So, digital sports platforms allude to the utilisation of diverse technological and internet platforms to improve, facilitate, and change several facets of the sports sector.

As Grüttner (2019) mentions in his work, “Sport is a digital ecosystem, meaning that through the collaboration environment through the different entities of the field, it is rising and producing value in communication and information through technologies” (Grüttner, A. (2019). Digital platforms have shaped the sports industry we know today in different dimensions. The key drivers of this transformation are broadcasting, technological advancement, fan engagements, sports marketing, and athlete branding. That is applied to the *Formula One* sports sphere. We can relate to this quote from Solberg for the *Drive to Survive* docuseries, “They have disrupted sports broadcasting, impacting and changing their models.” (Solberg, H. A., & Helland, K. (2011). Sports broadcasting. *Nordicom Review*, 32(2), 17-33.). It was observed that *Drive to Survive* had attracted a new audience and reached a new continent, the United States audience. (Shea, 2023). Nowadays, many audiences currently watching *Drive to Survive* that-

-were attracted by the docuseries are consuming *Formula One* content, from the *Grand Prix* races to the *social media* content of the *Formula One* organisation or the teams competing. Streaming services such as *Netflix* and *Amazon Prime* have provided live sports events and added exclusive content, allowing fans to consume content on different devices and from other places.

As Hutchins & Rowe (2010) highlighted, digital media related to sports offer ‘advantages’ compared to the ‘traditional’ media. Those advantages are the ability of those digital media: for instance, the broadcast live to air is just present for a defined period compared to digital media, which is available 24 hours a seven days per week. The geographical situation is also advantageous because you can relate wherever you are. One of the most ‘important’ is its easy access. (Hutchins & Rowe, 2010: 4, 23).

However, digital platforms are an asset not only for the sport but also for the athletes themselves. So, athletes' branding, especially personal social branding through the platform, is well used and can be considered an extension of their ‘work’ and portfolio. Platforms are used to build their brands, interact with fans, and show insight behind the scenes, as we can observe with the *Formula One* driver.

All those things are bringing us back to being a part of sports marketing. Sports marketing can be defined “...as tools focused on targeting and satisfying customers and consumers. In the sports field, the definition of marketing can be closed as sports marketing will be focused on tracking and meeting the needs of sports consumers, such as watching,-buying, and merchandising.” (Smith, A., 2012). Put, (“...”) sports marketing is the use and application of marketing concepts to sports products and services (...).” (Smith, A. 2012).

Through digital platforms, sports marketers have opportunities to do targeted advertising; they can reach consumers and customers precisely and shape their content according to their preferences, and users are usually sensible to personalisation. This customisation is allowed, but data analytics collected through digital platforms will enable marketers to analyse fan behaviours, data, engagement, and preferences. Through those data and marketing strategies, they can be more personalised and build effective campaigns. The integration of e-commerce platforms has been a shift for the industry; through those platforms, they sell merchandise and event tickets, changing the typical retail channel.

So, digital platforms in sports are evolving and embracing the sport. For this study, different platforms have been adopted and enriched by *Formula One* platforms: *Netflix* with the docuseries *Drive to Survive*, the *Instagram* account, *TikTok*, and the specialised TV channels in motorsports, podcasts, magazines, and specialised websites. Moreover, we can advance that digital platforms have completely transformed and changed the sports industry, including *Formula One*. Communication work is being enhanced throughout those platforms. New opportunities are being developed for work. New ways of creating content have been revolutionised as the different platforms impact different sectors, such as creating new job opportunities and consuming the sports content audience.

When we consider that applied to *Formula One*, the docuseries *Drive to Survive* is an excellent illustration of those images as it has attracted new audiences, especially in the United States of America, and changed the way *Formula One* sports broadcast models. Furthermore, the actors of these transformations are varied, as technology is one of them, as is the innovation of the commercial aspect, such as marketing, the way athletes are branding themselves, and the increase of fan engagement. 'Traditional media' can be seen as limited compared to digital media, which provides more advantages, such as mobility and ease of access; it is flexible and functional through different geographical points and times of access, meaning it is accessible at any time. The sport leverages those platforms to connect with fans and extend its built brand; it adds a personal touch to its professional image.

Nevertheless, digital platforms have revolutionised sports marketing by introducing targeted advertising and the new concept of content personalisation in data analytics. The personalisation aspect is driving more efficient marketing strategies and campaigns. This has allowed the *Formula One* field to enhance fan experiences, create new interaction channels, -and engage, generating new profits. Furthermore, this evolution can be observed through *Netflix* platforms and devices related to the *Formula One* community, such as *TikTok*, *Instagram*, podcasts, etc. In conclusion, digital platforms have not only revolutionised how sports like *Formula One* are consumed and communicated, but they have also opened fresh opportunities for expansion and involvement in the sector as a whole.

Media Effects

Different scholars framed the media effect theory, and a four-phase model has emphasised its effects (Bryant et al. 2002: 35-64). Media theory can be defined as how users decide to consume media and its effect on them: it analyses the correlation between the audience and the media. Media theory is strongly linked to media influence, which analyses how the media influences people's cognitive, behavioural, and emotional responses. Different effects can be observed and classified into various types, such as knowledge and beliefs, which are mental effects; emotions and attitudes, which are emotional effects; and actions and behaviours, which are behavioural effects. (Bandura, 2001: 1-26). One of the foremost perspectives of the media theory is the agenda-setting theory, which advocates that media play a role in the public agenda by highlighting and embedding specific issues and topics. (McCombs & Shaw, 2009: 99-105). Another part of this theory examines the long-term effects of media exposure, implying and demonstrating that media can shape our perception of reality, especially touching social values and norms; it is the cultivation theory. (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorielli, & Shanahan, 2002: 43-67).

However, focusing *on social media*, network theory regarding the *social media* field refers to the structure study and the dynamics and interactions of users in the digital network sphere. It studies how the different identities such as organisations, individuals and content connect and the implications generated by those connections on the flow of information, influence and behaviours focused on the digital sector (Scott, 2012: 114).

One relevant theory to speak of and identify is communication theory, which explores and analyses the mechanism and effects of communication on digital platforms. By examining how people, organisations, and content interact within the virtual environment, provides insights into knowledge-sharing, persuasion, and relationship-building dynamics in the digital age (Griffin, 2006: 2-53).

Interpersonal communication theory is linked to communication theory, and it starts with interpersonal communication theories to explain how individuals establish and maintain relationships in different environments. (Walther, 1992: 52-90). The interpersonal communication in this research explores how the broadcasting of digital platforms facilitates meaningful interaction at the base of the shaping of fan excellence and the public perception-

-of *Formula One*. Furthermore, it can give us insights and a more nuanced vision of the communication dynamic in the digital sports sphere.

Critical Concepts of Social Media

The critical concepts of digital fandoms, online communities, branding, and user-generated content are in the digital *social media* age and form the basic foundations for undressing the dynamics and evolving dynamics of the *Formula One* team on the platform studied *Instagram*.

As a broader term, fandom is derived from the word fan, who is a person who supports, presents a continued interest, or enjoyment of a specific activity, art or hobby that can go from the music sector to collection, sports and so on... (Fiske 1989: 345-359). However, Lanier et al. (2007) have framed fandom as “mostly divided and concentrating on an item of “popular culture”. (Lanier et al., A. R. (2013). *Digital Fandom: Mediation, remediation, and remediation of fan practices. The Routledge companion to digital consumption. Routledge, London.*) and (Gray et al., 2007: 1-116). Fandom is being seen as consumption in a passive part but also an active production; many fans are getting involved in creating content, for example, about something their fans are of, or just acting in the function of the “activity” they are fond of. (Fiske 1989: 345-359).

As For Jensen (2002), being a fan is not just about a cultural phenomenon; it is more profound than that; it is about having emotional string attachments and being involved in an activity or artistic passion. (Jensen 1992: 9-29). Fandom related to *social media* refers to the engagement of fans and the dedication they are putting to supporting and engaging with the phenomenon of their fans. *Social media* fandom usually involves content creation, discussions, and media-related content (Hills, 2002; 2-12).

Engaging in fandom on *social media* gives many fans a feeling of identity and community among others who share their interests (Sandvoss, 2005: pp. 67-153). With *social media*, fandom has evolved. Before being a fan, fans supported a team by being a fan club member, consuming all the vents, or purchasing merchandise. Digital fandoms can play a role in contemporary media and popular culture.

They have made fan participatory culture easier; fans are active but active contributors. Digital fandom has changed the dynamic between fan communities and media producers, and *social media* has disrupted the traditional media landscape.

Some ethical considerations have risen, such as privacy, cyberbullying, or violent behaviours online, and scholars have examined them. (Busse, 2017: 9-17).

This digital fandom implies an ‘era’ of *social media* branding, meaning *social media* has impacted brands and businesses. Businesses have adapted by branding online and managing and promoting their identities on platforms. (Wong, & Haque, 2022: 333-368).

User-generated content is a significant component of *social media* platforms, as users produce, distribute, and curate content. All those aspects have impacted the sports field, changing how people communicate about it.

The digital fandom, linked to the *Instagram* communication of teams on the *social media* platform *Instagram*, is that the *Formula One* teams are using and cultivating the digital fandom by the facts that they are sharing content that provides fans but also resonates with them, such as behind the scenes or highlights and even interactions with the drivers. Moreover, through that content, the fans can express their support through different actions. User-generated content (UGC) is a trend in *Formula One* teams. It encourages fans to share their content or experiences by posting content and creating hashtags, even sometimes with campaigns encouraging users to submit their content. Some fans have accounts on *social media*. Still, sometimes, they repost UGC content on their accounts to showcase a close relationship with fans, enhancing authenticity and credibility.

The online communities are seen as a turntable for *Formula One*, allowing fans to be together and share content and their passion for the sport. *Formula One* fosters online communities through different hosting events, fan challenges, and races happening each week. The branding age links to *Formula One* on *Instagram* in that the team uses the *Instagram* platform as a ‘key’ platform for the team's brand and brand building. They use their values and storytelling to create visuals and content and target strategic messages that still contribute to their brand identity. In conclusion, *Formula One* teams' *social media* communications on *Instagram* are closely connected to the fundamental ideas of *social media*, such as digital fandom, user-generated content, online communities, and branding age. By strategically utilising these ideas, teams can interact with fans more efficiently, increase brand awareness, and create a lively online community around *Formula One*.

Digital fandom has transformed fan engagement and allowed fans to be more active participants in the consumption and the creation and dissemination of content. However, this-

-user-generated content has blurred the boundaries between being a fan and a creator and is at the base of a more engaging and authentic brand presence. Online communities are a central element in cultivating the belonging of fans, and the brand has leveraged these interactions with AI to reinforce the brand identity. The addition of those concepts highlights and illustrates how the *Formula One* team is committed to *social media* to connect with fans, have and build an online community and enhance brand loyalty.

The Influence of Social Media

Social media Business was another area that was impacted. Through it, they have been allowed to forge new ways of working their communications, promotions and advertisements, and something non-forgettable is that they can communicate more directly with the consumer. Regarding *social media* and society, some platforms, let us name just one ‘Meta’, have changed how people interact together and how we live. (Siddiqui & Singh, 2016: 71-75). Many scholars have praised *social media* as a platform, mainly focusing on the pros and effects on the economy, linking it to an “innovative disruption.” (Parker and Choudary (2016). (Van Dijck, J., Powell, T., & De Waal, M. (2018).

That can be observed in *Formula One* sports, too, as through the *Instagram* platforms, for example, the *Formula One* official account or even the team accounts; it seems to be a second word, a society which is all about *Formula One* and what is happening on track and off track. On the other hand, for Jenkins, the participatory culture has low ‘borders’ regarding artistic expression and civic engagement, encourages individuals to create and share their works of art, and fosters an unofficial system of mentoring whereby those with more experience pass on their knowledge to those less experienced. (Jenkins, H., 2006). That effect can also be observed in the research sport for this study: On *social media*, whether it is *Instagram* or other known platforms, fans, especially ultra-involved fans, tend to create fan pages, outfit pages, fan pages, and even fan fiction stories about that, especially on the *Wattpad* platform.

Social media platforms also prioritise interactivity, allowing users to interact and engage through actions such as likes, comments, shares, and direct messages; this fosters a certain sense of community. The various *social media* networks serve as the basis for communication and content dissemination, as they are used to maintain virtual friendships, connections, and -

-friends, as is the case with *Formula One* sports. Still, streaming platforms such as *Netflix* are also using those tools. (Kaplan, & Haenlein, 2010: 59-68).

Nevertheless, the various available social platforms have impacted communication and consumption, including the sport of *Formula One*, because they provide the audience with virtual online platforms to build communities. These platforms allow the user to create, share, and engage, directly impacting their lifestyle and how they interact with each other, which is linked to connectivity. Platforms for *Formula One* fans have allowed constant connection through fan engagement. The different *social media* platforms have redesigned the field practices by impacting consumer communication and bringing new promotion strategies. As the platform analysed for this research is *Instagram*, we can observe it as a platform bringing to *Formula One* sport a digital society fostering participatory culture.

In the fast-paced world of *Formula One*, where split-second decisions on the track can determine victory or defeat, a parallel race unfolds in the digital realm. The introduction of *social media* and the groundbreaking documentary series ‘*Drive to Survive*’ has revolutionised the landscape of *Formula One* communication.

As the sport rushes into the digital age, *social media* platforms have developed into dynamic spaces where stories are shaped, fan interactions occur, and the worldwide *Formula One* community finds a virtual home. They are no longer just channels for updates. In this section, we embark on a journey through the symbiotic relationship between ‘*Drive to Survive*’ and *Formula One's* foray into *social media*, exploring how these digital platforms have accelerated the sport's reach, transformed fan engagement and left an indelible mark on how *Formula One* communicates with its audience.

Social media influence applies to the ability of *social media* platforms and their users to shape, affect, impact and influence different facets of people's decisions, opinions, behaviours, and attitudes in both online and offline environments. This influence can be exerted in various ways, such as persuasion and information dissemination, behaviour modification, or the development of online communities.

As part of the process, *social media* enables information dissemination by fast disseminating the news, information, the “trends”, and divergence of opinion. Information -

-dissemination can have an impact on perception and awareness. (Berger, 2013: 22-71). This is illustrated in the current research by the fact that what is happening “online” as the event with the team principal of the Red Bull team and the supposed sexual harassment on his security rumours, which started online and are currently impacting his position but also the ambience the track, and the work. Another influence of *social media*, as technology is a rising era, has brought new phenomena, such as influencers and influencer marketing, to every field, from fashion to sports.

Influencers are relevant and impactful in the *Formula One* field. One phenomenon that can be observed is that thanks to *social media*, *Lissie McIntosh* has emerged from her own creation of content regarding motorsports, especially *Formula One*. The rise of specific influencers was also enhanced through the *Drive to Survive* docuseries. She is considered one of the factors in *Formula One's* rise, or more accurately, its enhancement, primarily related to the women’s audience. She started to create content on her socials about and connected to motorsport, and through that, the rise began, and she is now an ‘important’ and unmissable face of the *Formula One* media field, but also a pillar for a whole new generation. Through the rise and the latest craze around *Formula One* connected to the *Netflix* docuseries, she is regularly presenting paddocks when they are weekend races, creating motorsport content for her different platforms, as before, but also being She is at the head of her podcast, ‘Going Purple,’ talking about various topics. One of them is *Formula One*. (Fairman, 2023).

So, *social media's* influence on *Formula One* can be considered significant, by first sight, reshaping the way fans engage with the sport. However, as we are interested in this research, we also want to know how teams communicate, how drivers communicate, and how *Formula One* sports as a brand resonates with its audience. *Formula One social media* has achieved global reach and fan engagement through different platforms, such as *Twitter* (now *X*), *Instagram*, *Facebook*, *YouTube*, and *TikTok*. These platforms provide the sport with other global platforms to reach fans worldwide.

Another aspect enhanced by *social media* is the improved fan experience, enhanced by the expertise provided to fans through platforms and the ability to interact with one another. *Social media* also allows fans to see content ‘behind the scenes’ and be more intimate with the team they are following and supporting; it will enable a direct link between fans and the leading actor of the *Formula One* sport.

The team branding allowed *social media* to help enhance their brands and identities regarding on-track and off-track content. *Social media* offers the team marketing and sponsorship opportunities that allow them to showcase their partnership and put them on the scene. This allowed us to reach and target an engaged audience. The collaboration often aims to create engaging content through branded videos or challenges by amplifying brand visibility and driving fan interaction.

Chapter 3- Public Relations

In the fast-evolving sports landscape, public relations (PR) has become a key and crucial element in shaping the reputation, image, and marketability of athletes and sports. The advancement of digital media, especially the rise of social platforms, has mainly transformed the interaction between athletes and the public, as well as the brand and media, creating new challenges and opportunities for branding and personal branding.

The following chapter will explore the intersection of athlete branding and public relations by delving into the different components contributing to the athlete's public image. We will start by examining what is considered 'traditional' public relations practices, followed by how those strategies have been adapted to modern marketing, advertising, and *social media* communication. Moreover, the impact of media exposure on athlete branding will be observed by observing how media coverage can raise awareness but also inconveniently affect the athlete's public persona. Throughout participatory culture, the examination of fan interaction and user-generated content has become an integral part of the process of athletes' branding, which impacts and influences everything from self-presentation to personal identity. Finally, the commercialisation of sports through media will be observed by investigating how the convergence of the sports business and media life has redesigned the industry.

Throughout this chapter, we will gain a perspective on the public relations techniques used to develop, preserve, and safeguard athletes' brands in a world dominated by the media, where every move is closely watched, and every interaction can have far-reaching effects.

3.1 Public relations

In this research, we must recognise public relations, as sports communication is closely related to public relations. As Hutchins & Tindall (2021) framed the term, Public Relations derives from the effect of *social media* and what it has brought about and improved the practice of public relations (Hutchins & Tindall, 2021: 35-52).

Sports can be considered as a "network organisation", especially regarding *Formula One* sport. They stated that public relations (PR) must be implemented to reduce and control the negative-

-impact of scandals in sports communications, especially with the evolution and importance of entertainment. (Hopwood, Skinner, & Kitchin, 2012: Chapter 1).

Simply put, public relations in sports can be framed as the relationship between sports organisations and the media, such as journalists. The aim is to get ‘good’ and positive publicity for the athletes through different media channels. This technique follows a plan for establishing a mutual agreement between two entities (Sideman, 2023).

Nevertheless, for Harlow (1976), public relations can be defined and seen as a whole organisation that goes from management functions such as establishing and maintaining lines of communication to keeping informed public cooperation; it can be seen as a system. (Harlow, 1976: 34-42). However, scholars can find another definition from Broom; it is more about the management aspect of sports communications, “public relations is the guidelines establishing the relationships between organisation and public” (Broom et al., 2009). For this researcher, it is all about management. On the other hand, as Gibson, Gonzales, & Castanon (2006) framed it, PR can also be seen from a reputation perspective; they stated it as the tool concerned with the consequence of the action of a field that needs to be scrutinised and managed. (Gibson, Gonzales, & Castanon, 2006: 15).

When we think about the sports domain, the first field that comes to mind is marketing, but public relations is one of the pillars of the sports field. Marketing would be more complex and impossible without the Public Relations sector (Hopwood et al., 2012). It was observed that nowadays, fan studies focus on digital culture and *social media*, increasing the relationship between the creator of content and their fans (Chin, 2016; Marwick et al., 2011). We know that media is always searching to keep the audiences and fans connected but, most importantly, engaged because it is essential for building brand loyalty. Chin (2016) observed that the considered most loyalist and field fans are not staying on one platform to consume media connected to the subject that they love, meaning that they more often consume content related to a topic they like on different platforms, not only *Instagram* but for example consuming content about *Formula One* on *Instagram* and also *Tik Tok*.

Public relations in sports goes far beyond the security of positive publicity, as it involves the maintenance of different involved parts such as the media and sports organisations, the management of the reputation and the handling of crises. Integrating public relations into the sports industry is essential as it is inching and supporting different spheres such as effective communication, marketing, and cohesive strategy. Public relations have become essential to -

-contemporary sports communication due to the increased connection between athletes, teams, and their fan base brought about by digital culture and *social media*.

3.2 Marketing and advertising

Sports marketing can be defined as displaying commercial sports-related tools to promote them (Cheong et al., 2019; Pyun & James, 2011). They framed sports content and an advertising presence during events as required to encourage sports. Another eminent researcher in the area, Cameron (2009), framed the advertising process as functioning and having three-way communication processes: “between the consumer, the sponsor and the organisations» (Cameron, N. 2009: 131).

When discussing marketing, especially in sports, we tend to mix it with sponsorships. Sponsorship and advertising are not the same and need to be differentiated. The term advertising means “(...) the advertising means is used thanks to the media through an “interrupted mode,” meaning that it is not directly from the sender but using a media transmission.

The presence of marketing in sports and advertising is sometimes a negative issue for spectators. Outside the sports sector and context, advertising can be considered and received negatively. However, through different research, Pyun et al. (2012) framed the consumer as more inclined to receive positive sports advertising than other types of advertising (Pyun et al., 2012: 43-63).

On the other hand, Meenaghan (2001) framed that advertising can be perceived as a capitalist and egoistic scheme because it aims to profit. (Meenaghan, 2001: 191-215). Regarding consumer behaviour towards advertising, focusing on the sports sector is sceptical. (Schlosser, Shavitt, & Kanfer, 1999: 34-54).

Nowadays, advertising is an integral part of our daily lives. Advertising is everywhere around us, and it has been accentuated with technology. With this ubiquity, people tend to have grown an “aversion” toward advertising (Pyun & James, 2011). They argued that management and managers need to be aware and fully understand the audience they are communicating with.

Pedersen and Kian (2020) argued that studying and analysing sports communication is “more than analysing production and reception of sports media”.

So, sports communications can be defined as the process through which individuals from the sports sphere set and create interactions.

The rise and evolution of technology have redesigned the landscape regarding advertising or marketing in sports. Sports marketing differs from sponsorship as the first involves direct communication through media channels; otherwise, sponsorship involves directly associating with the concerned source. To ensure effective communication, it is crucial to understand and target the correct demographic, as the ubiquitous nature of advertising in modern culture has led to aversion among some groups. In sum, the three spheres are marketing, advertising, and sponsorship. When discussing sports, communication is essential to integrate as it is crucial for driving engagement, brand loyalty, and promotion of the sports industry.

Athlete Branding

It is not unknown that the sports industry is heavy, so athletes must participate and take advantage of it to promote themselves and the sport through *social media* platforms. As observed in 2023, the global sports market revenue was estimated at 512,14 million US dollars and is estimated to reach 623,63 billion US dollars in 2027 (Statista, 2023). The United States is still the estimated largest market globally for sports, but Latin America, Europe, and Asia closely follow it. (Walden, 2016: 206-217).

Nowadays, almost every athlete is branding themselves or getting media exposure through their networks, whether on *social media* or other means. Within the sports industry, "athlete branding" outlines how individual athletes create and develop a unique, marketable identity and image. (Kassing & Sanderson, 2010: 421-435). We must utilise schema theory and brand architecture to better understand athlete branding and media exposure. Brand architecture provides a framework to analyse and help understand brands' influence on athletes (Su et al., 2020: 33-46).

Social media are estimated as a key and essential platform for athletes to maintain relationships with fans and develop their personal branding to brand themselves through the platforms. (Kunkel, Scott, & Beaton, 2016: 415-423). Scholars studying the field of athlete branding and media exposure tend to focus on two main aspects: fan engagement foundations and structure and athletes' experience. The main methods used by the scholar are content analysis and the interview.

The conducted studies admittedly point out that *social media* reflects that the athletic athlete is the portion of the athlete brand; it is not the only aspect and characteristic of *social media* of the athlete branding. (Su, Baker, Doyle, & Kunkel, 2020: 33-46).

Moreover, *Drive to Survive* can be observed as an illustration of an extension of the athlete branding managed by the athletes, streaming platforms, and external producers of their teams. Personal values, personality, endorsements, and public image are some of its components. Effective athlete branding can result from increased endorsement opportunities, fan interaction, and a long-lasting legacy in the sports industry. (Grau, Roselli, & Taylor, 2007: 388-397).

Athletes 'media exposure refers to how their activities are featured in print, online, television, and *social media*. It includes the type and volume of media attention, features, interviews, and the athlete's presence across different forms of media. Media exposure is essential for athletes since it dramatically impacts their marketability, visibility, and popularity (Braun & Wicklund, 2006: 147-167).

Finally, athlete branding and media exposure are and have become crucial components of the nowadays and modern sports industry, mainly influenced by *social media*. The athlete is leveraging the different available platforms, such as *Instagram*, *X*, or streaming services, to cultivate personal brands that go beyond the athlete's achievements. Moreover, this way of branding is essential to the endorsement part, enhancement of engagement and a lasting legacy. Here, through the *Drive to Survive* example that shows the drivers and teams, their image and brand are extended through media exposure while demonstrating the interlined relation between personal value and marketing in the sports domain.

Media Coverage

Regarding media coverage, whatever the field is, it was the basis of communication worldwide. Linked to the sports sphere, media coverage is the 'producer' of the field, meaning that they are currently producing, distributing, and deciding how it will be watched but also when: they are deciders of the content the audiences will watch. (Turner, Schultz, Caskey, & Esherick, 2012: 259-263). Media coverage involves reporting facts through news using photography, radio, broadcasting, and *social media*. Media coverage has evolved with the rise-of technology but was initially known for being occasional (Sowell, 2008: 51). For him, sports media coverage began in the late 1840s, in 1849, with the telegraph's creation.

Sports media coverage and media coverage have been framed as a part of the sports economy (Dawson et al., 2011: 15-42). When discussing media coverage, scholars strongly link it to gender (equity), race (racism), and how media coverage impacts our perceptions. Media coverage reveals the gender gap in the field of sports. Sports broadcasting of football is a perfect example that shows us that the trend is biased through/ around male athletes. Furthermore, male athletes tend to be considered more important than female athletes (Billings & Angelini, 2007: 95-111; Lim, 2018:1-30). The media coverage of sports is disparate and different through gender: the 'female' sport that tends to be more broadcasted is considered more 'aesthetic' than the men's broadcast, which tends to show more content, force, and speed. (Lim, 2018: 1-30). Lim framed media companies as the key to the affection of the mindset audience. Through *social media* and its role in our society, media coverage can be considered a significant part of *social media*. (Filo, Lock, & Karg, 2015: 166-181). Bernstein and Kian observed the 'ambivalence' technique used by the media when linked to female sports broadcasting. When a topic or issue is portrayed in the media in a way that presents conflicting thoughts or attitudes, it is referred to as ambivalence in media coverage (Bernstein & Kian, 2013: 319-327).

In brief, media coverage, its ability to provide real-time updates, dynamic fan interaction, worldwide reach, and amplifying user-generated materials are essential to *Formula One* communication on *social media*. *Formula One* teams can use *social media* platforms to improve media coverage's visibility, accessibility, and engagement, helping them build stronger relationships with fans and stakeholders in the digital world.

Commercialisation and Media in Sports

The size of the sports sponsorship market worldwide in 2022 was 66.1 billion US dollars. It is expected to grow in the next few years as the prevision is estimated to reach 107.97 billion dollars by 2030 (Statista. (2023, July 12).

Sponsorship is the process or strategies used to create a partnership between a sports organisation and an entity (team, athletes, event). Sponsorship is categorised into different-areas: Team Sponsorship, Event Sponsorship, Athlete Sponsorship, Stadium/Arena Sponsorship (involves naming rights for sports venues) and Product Endorsement. (Mullin, Hardy, & Sutton,2014: 179-229). Through this partnership, the organisation invests financial assets in exchange for the entity's 'use'. Sports sponsorship aims to accomplish some goals, such as raising brand awareness, connecting the sponsor with the emotions and values of the sports organisation, and interacting with a target market of consumers and sports fans it is global (Mullin et al., 2014: 179-229).

This growth has attracted scholars, and numerous studies have been conducted. Cornwell and Maignan (1998) reviewed the sponsorship literature on publishing in English, French, and German. They found that sponsorship is a communication tool and promotion but has also replaced the founding process in a certain way and modified this part of the sports work process (Cornwell, & Maignan, 1998: 1-21).

The studies observed that awareness was one of the effects. Some trends can be observed through the commercialisation of sports, such as using digital media, influencer partnerships, and social responsibility initiatives. Another aspect is an image. It was linked that sponsorship impacts image, especially perception (Meenaghan & Shipley, 1999: 328-349). The last effect identified by scholars is purchase intentions. Purchase intentions have been studied in the social human sphere, including who was more prone to buy sponsor products in education and how they attended sports events (Walliser, 2003: 5-40).

Sports commercialisation in the sports era and its roles in the media sector have totally influenced the business dynamics of the industry. Sponsorship has become a vital domain of marketing strategies, allowing companies to align their organisations with the values and emotions of sports organisations. Over time, sponsorship has changed, entering the sports -

-industry and driving new trends, such as digital media partnerships or other social responsibility initiatives. These changes highlight the increasing influence of media and commercialisation on how sports are shaped in the future.

3.3 Social Media Communication

In an ultra-connected world, *social media* is an essential part of our daily lives, personally and at work; it is an omnipresent aspect nowadays. *Social media*, whether it concerns fashion or sports, has defined characteristics, as Hull & Abeza (2021) enunciate: “Generated content, no third parties (no “Gate Keeper”), availability, omnipresence, driven by the aim of contributing to the community, different purposes and active” (Hull et al., G. (2021). As in the sports industry, it involves various parties such as “(...) athletes, coaches, managers, executives, teams, fans, events, leagues and sports organisations (...)” (Hull et al., 2021).

This means that, for the first time, users create content directly by themselves, without a gatekeeper or media intermediaries. The sports domain primarily focuses on *Formula One*, including videos or photos generated by fans, teams, athletes, or other stakeholders. It is the availability and the omnipresence of UGC through multiple platforms, driven by the aim of contributing to the community and adding value to the conversation and community online. It serves different purposes (UGC), from self-expression to entertainment, actively shaping the live conversation and the culture around sports. The traits listed point to the importance of user-generated content in influencing the *social media* scene in the sports industry, encouraging community involvement, and enabling users to take an active part in the digital sports ecosystem.

When speaking about *social media*, we can identify different platforms that are a part of it. First of all, we have the means of blogs and social networks such as *Twitter*; we also have categories of content communities that can be attached to *Instagram*, the studied platform here, or *Pinterest*; for example, regarding the spirit of forums or discussions, we have *Doctissimo* or *Reddit*. (Hull & Abeza, 2021: pp. 1-28), Abeza and O’Reilly, 2018: 177-221).

Social Media in sports is regarded as necessary, especially concerning its impacts, because almost “every” party involved in the sphere are on *social media*. All the parts involved in *social media* for sports have aims. Some of them are different, whether from a league or a-

-brand perspective, but the end stays the same, as Hull and Abeza framed (2021): to create a sense of excitement and remain attractive to their audiences and fans. The different aims vary depending on who the communicators are, as mentioned above. Still, it contributes to showcasing teams and the life of athletes' insights to generate exposure, engage fans, and grow visibility (Pegoraro, 2010: 501-514).

The immediacy and interactivity factor has been framed as critical for fans and a place where fans can find themselves not physically but virtually (Abeza et al., 2017: 332-355). Regarding *social media* users, a frame was established by Harridge-March and Quinton (2009), categorising the users into six different categories:

1. “Newbies” are the new users who begin in discussions but are identified as fully committed.
2. “Lukers” are users who are more in the analysing and observing phase before being involved.
3. “Onlookers” are users who occasionally participate and use *social media* to stay in touch with something in their interests.
4. “Minglers” are irregular content generators or posters.
5. “Devotees” are devoted and are fully committed.
6. “Influencers”.”

As Bertha Chin observed, scholars have studied the last decades, especially from a perspective of *social media* relations between the people producing the media content and the fans (Chin, 2016: 8-12). The main concern that is emerging and being observed by the media industry is that they are always trying to figure out how to keep the engagement rate high, how and which ways to ensure loyalty to a brand, and how to build a stable one. Through her work, she observed that one effective way to achieve that is to use “the narrative strategy of transmedia storytelling” to tell a story across different media platforms. This multiple telling across platforms creates a whole and brings ‘something to the table’, meaning it gets something valuable to the company in the ensemble (Chin, 2016; Jenkins, 2006).

Social media has become an indispensable tool and component of the sports landscape, especially concerning the communication perspective, as it is rooted in the daily operations of sports organisations, teams, and athletes. *Social media* defines characteristics such as user-

-generated content, interactivity, and immediacy, which have changed sports content creation, consumption, and sharing.

Interpersonal Communication

In the realm of the communication of the *Formula One* team on *social media*, such as *Instagram*, interpersonal communication serves as a foundational element that underpins the dynamics of human interaction, shaping relationships, influencing decision-making processes, and driving outcomes. As we delve into the intricacies of the relationship of audience with *-social media* and the impact of *Formula One* docuseries on *Netflix* on how teams are currently communicating on *Instagram* and its impact, it becomes imperative to examine the role of interpersonal communication and its effect on the way teams are communicating.

Interpersonal communication, defined as the exchange of information, ideas, and emotions between individuals, is the lifeblood of human connection and serves as a conduit for understanding, empathy, and collaboration. In the context of this conducted research, interpersonal communication takes on added significance, as it mediates the interactions between the audience's perception and is impacted through the *Netflix* docuseries on *social media* communication.

The sports sphere is filled with interpersonal communication, advertising, relationships with teammates/ coaches, sponsorships, fans, etc... (Izquierdo & Anguera, 2021: 1-8). Riva (2002) studied and focused on interpersonal communications and identified it as another field of the sport, another game of everyday interaction with the capabilities of attending to different levels of communication (Riva, 2002: 581-598).

Sport, by definition, can be regarded as an interpersonal interaction and intercommunication, as Turman (2016) framed it because it is an existing and current relationship that re-permits interaction between the parties involved. In this interpersonal communication, Turman (2016) also argued that we could identify an aspect of power emanating from the coaches, which can happen in various contexts. Coach has been identified as the main 'character' conducting and influencing, even being at the origin of the structure of the athlete's action in the sports community, which means that they are at the basis of their understanding, performance in the interpersonal communication and the reflection in the-

-community. As the researcher established, the family can also be strongly linked to interfering and being a part of interpersonal communication in sports (Turman, 2016:179-191).

Scholars like McCormack stated that interpersonal communication is a means to exchange practical information about one's emotions and thoughts ... (McCormack et al. 2013: pp. 11); this is a moving dynamic. The goals of interpersonal communication are multiple, as Onwumechili, C. (2017) framed three: the “instrumental goal, the self-representation, and the relationship goals.”

To conclude, interpersonal communication plays a pivotal role in the dynamic of *social media* in the *Formula One* sphere. It supports the relationship between the different involved parties, that is, the fans, athletes, and organisations, and it influences engagement and perceptions at the same time. It shows the importance of interpersonal communication within the sport, as it shapes the digital landscape, as shown through the impact of the *Netflix Drive to Survive* docuseries.

Personal Identity

As it was argued in our social lives and communications, the Internet has allowed our lives to be simultaneously reachable and identifiable synchronously. (Fuchs, & Trottier, 2015: 113-135). This fact can be observed through *social media* platforms and streaming platforms. An exciting finding is that communication technologies can facilitate more affluent, deeper bonds by extending intimate encounters beyond the obstacles of location and time (Chambers, 2013: 61-81).

Scholars have observed that two tendencies appear when we investigate using *social media* tools to keep social connections. Baym (2010) identified that in terms of usage, all digital media have evolved to be more personalised and varied worldwide (Baym, 2010: 99-131). On a second time, in addition to such diversity, digital communication also includes various mediated interactions in a complex, multiple-media environment. The number of media outlets supporting an intimate engagement increases with the closeness of the relationship. Research has shown that the relationship between the interaction dynamic and technology changes and shifts naturally (Chambers, 2013: 66–81). This is linked to the *Formula One* sports field; the -

-docuseries *Drive to Survive* is increasing and expanding *Formula One's* traditional mainstream broadcast means (TV) by providing another supplementary platform to the *Formula One* world, in addition to television, applications, websites, and *social media*.

Many researchers consider there is a debate around personality and self-representation on *social media*. Digital dualism views online and offline identities as distinct (Turkle, 2011: 154-296), and augmented reality, where offline and online identities are interlaced and seen as an expanded view of identity (Boyd, 2014: 29-54). Another aspect being included in the account is identity as a performance, as Goffman's theory (1959) can be articulated to explain how people experience and perform the different aspects of their personalities and identities on *social media* to present themselves more as characters on a digital stage and platform (Goffman, 2002: 259). Tajfel and Turner's social identity theory, developed in 1979, examines how people classify themselves and others into different social groups and how participation in these groups affects identity development and behaviour *in social media*, even sports (Tajfel et al.; 1979: 56-59). Linking those to the algorithm influences Pariser's (2011) research on how personalised algorithms can impact and influence the content people see, possibly affecting and reinforcing their existing beliefs (Pariser, 2011: 125-146).

This strategy and dynamic are pertinent for *Formula One*, as the sport is leveraging various platforms, such as *Drive to Survive*, to enhance fan engagement and expand its reach. Combining personal and professional identities online affects how athletes and teams manage their public personas and how spectators view and relate to the sport. This changing digital environment emphasises how crucial it is to comprehend how one's identity and self-presentation fit into the larger framework of contemporary sports communication.

Social Connectivity

In sports communication, social interaction and connection are essential in determining the nature of fan involvement, the interactions between athletes and brands, and the overall sports media environment. This section examines the complex relationships between social interaction and connection in the sports context of communication, highlighting the implications for spectator experiences, athlete involvement, and industry practices. The best definition of social interaction is how people interact in a shared social environment.

This interaction involves verbal and nonverbal communication, information exchange, and relationship development. This dynamic process is essential to establishing identities, creating social norms, and creating meaning in any given community (Goffman, 2019: 30).

Connectivity in social interaction is the degree to which individuals and groups are physically and online connected through communication channels, networks, and relationships. It includes how individuals create, preserve, and improve their connections, communicate information, and participate in cooperative activities within a social setting. Connectivity enables interactions through multiple platforms, *social media*, and communication technology and fosters a shared presence despite geographical distances (Castells, 2013: 10-71; Turkle, 2011: 177-255).

The significance of social interaction and connectivity in sports communications depends on different factors. The first is, as mentioned, fan engagement, which provides platforms for fans to connect with others and share the content that they are following regarding the sports teams and athletes. This phenomenon is also observed in *Formula One*. The second aspect is the media consumption habits driven by the rise of *social media* platforms and digital media. These have impacted and changed how sports are consumed, discussed, and related, as well as how they are shared between supporters and ways to broadcast them. So, this is key to knowing and understanding how social interaction and connection shape media preferences, mainly media consumption habits. Thirdly, the athlete-brand relationship allows athletes and companies to communicate and engage with fans more directly, generating authentic relationships using the athlete's influence to enhance brand loyalty and visibility. Lastly, global industry practices, such as media outlets, the sports industry, and brands, are reposing and focusing on the social interaction between fans and athletes because it helps them align marketing strategies, content creation, and other aspects. They need insights to be more forward and effective in their practices and find new trends. Fans are a part of the equation in the organisation of interconnectivity and social interaction; they are the key. (Krishna & Kim, 2016: 21-32).

Public relations play and underscore a critical role in shaping the reputation and marketability of sports organisations and the actors that are angles in a media-driven world. With the rise of digital media, especially *social media* platforms such as *Instagram*, traditional PR strategies have changed and evolved to address the challenges and opportunities of constant fan engagement and connectivity. Those insights are directly related to the focus of this-

-research, which examines how *Formula One* teams use and leverage *Instagram* to connect with their audience and cultivate brand loyalty.

Public relations frames that it is an essential tool for managing athlete and their reputations and the team's reputation. *Formula One* teams' PR strategies are about managing the eventual crises, creating positive media coverage, and creating a meaningful long-term connection with fans. Furthermore, through the *Instagram* platform, the teams are actively managing their brand identity by sharing curated content appealing to their audience. It appeals to its audience and limits the risks and negative exposure.

The commercial aspect of sports, especially in communication, is examined through marketing and advertising. The *Formula One Instagram* strategy involves teams putting on stage sponsorship, displaying brand content, and using advertising to generate revenue and boost the team's visibility. *Instagram* has become a key tool channel where the teams communicate their partnership and build a seamless narrative toward their brand, reinforcing their image as a team and a marketable entity.

This is connected to athlete branding; as observed in *Formula One*, sports drivers are not just competitors but influential individuals who can be leveraged as a brand. *Instagram* allows the athletes to shape their personal branding through stories, publications, and behind-the-scenes that are hiring them and also connecting them to foster deeper and connections.

That media co-exposure impacts athlete branding, as *Formula One* teams use *Instagram* to broadcast and amplify their image. We can observe the capitalisation of trends as a *Drive to Survive*, connect and engage with the audience, and reach a new audience.

Social media communication is one of the central objects of this chapter. The highlights show how the immediacy of user-generated content on *Instagram* allows the *Formula One* team to engage with fans, have direct interactions, and strengthen brand loyalty. The real-time feature also fosters dynamic two-way communication between the teams, athletes, and audience.

Fan engagement is being enhanced through interpersonal communication as the team uses the *Instagram* platform to create deeper personal connections. It is connected to this research by building sustainable and strong relationships through *social media*.

Chapter 4 - Sports Audience

From the diverse perspectives of sports broadcasting to the *social media* sphere, the landscape of sports media and communication has evolved significantly. This evolution has facilitated interactions between fans and athletes and influenced sponsorship. It is a dynamic landscape continually shaping how audiences and fans consume and engage with sports. The research problem driving this research is how the global sport of *Formula One* approaches new audiences through *social media* and how those strategies affect the audiences.

Understanding audience engagement and perception is crucial in the sports sphere, as they are the basis of fan loyalty. Audience perception, meaning how fans interpret the content and their actions across different platforms, is influenced by various factors, including gun drill background, media exposure tie, and the cultural context.

The society's communication landscape audience has undergone a significant transformation, especially considering the digital age and technological advances redefined by advancements and media platforms. The relationships between sports and spectators have been redefined. Throughout this chapter, we will examine the evolution of sports audiences by examining how their roles, behaviours and interactions have shifted through time, offering a comprehensive understanding of what composes an audience in the sports context. We must first define and quantify the audience concepts to fully engage with them. To speak about an audience, we need to understand how to quantify it and how we can measure it, meaning that we have to understand how it is measured in terms of size and engagement from a critical perspective of analysis. It involves traditional metrics and newer forms of measurement that consider digital interactions, *social media* activity, and the UGC. This will provide a more straightforward understanding of how sports organisations, athletes, and teams effectively measure their impact and reach in the media landscape.

4.1 Evolution of Sports Audience

As Wenner said, it was observed and studied that sports and media are intersections. For him, the evolving role of media, especially *social media* technologies, is shaping the industry-

-of the sport and the world where the athletes and fans are evolving and experiencing. For him, the media's influence on sports narratives, as he emphasises the critical role of media, is the principal of shaping the narrative and discourse surrounding the sports sphere. The different media actors build the 'storylines', impacting how the audiences interpret and perceive the sport (Wenner, 2021: 111-126).

As observed, the communication and sports media landscape has undergone a profound transformation as digital technology advances and emerges. (Billings, 2012: 1-7). The following overview shows us that the era of media communication has evolved, starting with the print media, which was the 'early beginning' if we can say so. Print media were compared to newspapers and magazines, and sports coverage started with print media in the late and early 20th century. It was the primary and first source for spectators and audiences to consume sports content; it was their primary source with detailed reports, results, and some analysis perspectives. (Boyle & Haynes, 2009: 19-43). The invention of the radio, following the print media, marked an era of unquestionable success and a Golden Age. With its rise in the twenties and thirties, the radio emerged as a powerful tool and medium for sports communication. It revolutionised how sports were consumed, bringing 'real-time' broadcasts of sporting events into households, thereby widening the diffusion and plausible audience. The radio made sports more accessible, allowing every person with a radio transistor to experience a sports event as a fan. (Schultz, & Wei, 2013: 137-145). The radio was also the medium, allowing the fans to attend an event without being physically where it happened, creating another connection to their supporting teams or athletes. (Chandler & Munday, 2011: 346).

The era of radio and broadcast was followed by a more visual era, the television era, which arose with the visual revolution. This era happened in the middle of the twentieth century and brought essential changes to the sports media; some crucial events were broadcast, such as the Super Bowl in the United States, and the Olympic games were covered, too. Those broadcasting for Rowe allowed the integration of sport into popular culture (Rowe, 1997: 472). The sports network was born by launching a dedicated channel that provided the audience with a 24/7 broadcast of sports, reports, and analyses. Still, in the visual era of television, it introduced the audience to the ability to rewatch and replay moments of their different games and sports, as well as some data graphics. The replay and on-screen graphics have enhanced expertise, giving the fans more insight, data, and analysis, which was a way to foster the fans' community (Whannel, 2005: 1-10).

After this visual era, which was television, came the digital age, which encompassed the internet and the rise of *social media*. Related to the sports field, as this research focused on it, we observed the emergence of online sports websites in the late 1990s and early 2000s; mainly, it was sports websites, blogs, and forums, but who knew a fast proliferation. In their various formats, these digital platforms offered a wealth of multimedia content and provided real-time updates, revolutionising the accessibility and immediacy of sports consumption. (Rowe & Hutchins, 2013: 1-16).

Following the emergence of online sports websites, it was the time of *social media* platforms. Those platforms, like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, have contributed to the transformation of the sport, especially regarding and connected to communication. Those platforms have allowed different things for the audiences and fans, but mainly allow the direct interaction between the athletes, teams, and fans, creating a more fostered, engaged and participatory sports culture. (Billings, Butterworth, & Turman, 2017, chapter 3; 39-56). Each different platform has allowed me to create and foster a relationship with fans:

- *Facebook* allowed and enabled the building of a community through groups and fan pages, where fans could engage with each other.
- *Twitter* became mainly essential through live updates and fresh breaking news (which are also responsible for generating more fake news and rumours) and real-time interactions with the fans.
- *YouTube* allows users to share videos and highlights, such as interviews and behind-the-scenes content, generating a more personal connection with fans and appointments.
- Finally, *Instagram*, the studied platform, focuses on visual content, allowing teams and athletes to share different content formats, such as images and videos, that create a more personal connection with fans.

Those different *social media* platforms generated and facilitated an unprecedented and unknown level of fan engagement through the different tools proposed by the platforms, such as comments, likes, or shares, to interact with content and be more included and active in the sports media ecosystem (Wenner, 2021: 111-126).

Artificial intelligence (*AI*) is a game-changer in sports communication. It is not just about data analytics but also *AI*-driven content and personalisation experiences that are becoming central and essential. *AI* is going deeper into strategies and game insights, providing more information on different aspects such as performance and fan preferences. This is just the beginning of *AI*'s potential for enhancing fan experiences in sports media (Gerrard et al., 2014).

As fans can communicate with each other and are more active in sports media communication through User-Generated Content (UGC), they can become 'creators' by sharing their views and perspectives by creating photos, montages, videos, and fan fiction. One of the platforms that experienced the most rise in UGC related to sports content is *Snapchat*, which adds a new dimension to sports media. Through those different aspects, the evolution of sports media and communication reflects a broader aspect: technology and the evolution and changes in our world. The more sports communications evolve, the more interactive and immersive they become through the different platforms that we know.

4.2 Defining Audience

The first idea around the argument of the audience was that a majority of commercial (or even state) "mass media have as their unstated purpose or result from the establishment and preservation of a false consciousness that maintains the dominant status of the propertied classes and prevents any active resistance. (Hall, S. 1977: 340). The linear communication model has shifted to a circular model with multiple network connections. For the researcher, the main argument to remember when speaking about audiences is that audiences cannot be controlled or manipulated. (McQuail, 2013).

Commonly, an audience can be designated as a group of people or a particular group currently watching the same content. This applies to the *Formula One* audience through the different platforms and networks. Bennett, T. (2018: 145-160) framed the audience as "the person or people you want to communicate with, address a message to, or forward something", and that is the aim of the different teams in *Formula One*, to reach and communicate to their audience. As an audience sees the same things, the phenomenon of interpretation and perception is not entering on stage. The audience can see the same thing, but-

-the interpretation they get from the “message” can vary from individual to individual, as can our background and feelings.

The audiences fluctuate because the diverse platforms and media audiences can be regarded as unpredictable or less reliable than ‘before’ because they are more fragmented, and their engagement fluctuates. For her, the audience needs to be acknowledged as active and plural (Livingstone, 1999: 59-66). Still, another research point of her argument regarding audiences is that they are usually seen with a bad connotation. This explains why people assume an audience is a sheep, ignorant, naïve, and easily manipulated; this has a pejorative sense in particular minds and research studies (Livingstone, 2003: 337-359).

When speaking about audiences, we must mention the term ‘public’. Richard Butsch defined it as an identified group or individuals involved in discourses about public matters. (Butsch, 2011: 22-40). However, the simplest way to frame it will be to say that the public is a group or agglomerate of people sharing ‘something’ or a similar interest without concealment with each other.

As this research focuses on the sports field, we must address the sports audience. Shani (1997) framed sports audiences from a marketing relationship perspective. This model provides insights and explanations about what companies are going for and the marketing perspective. (Shani, 1997: 6-16). This researcher concentrates on the importance of the relationship with the customer (CRM= Customer Relationship Management) and analyses and comprehends the lifetime value of customers. The main argument is that the market needs to be segmented and targeted through the marketing effort. However, coming with the need to create something memorable to foster fan loyalty and engagement, that is a strategic role to expand the brand reach other than the strategic role of sponsorship and partnership to align with the fan values.

Stavros, Pope, and Winzar (2008) highlight the profound emotional connections and the loyalty of fans to sports and sports teams; for them, this reinforces the need for behavioural segmentation and creating strategies (marketing) about emotional resonance that reach the emotional sphere of the fans by using co-creation values and marketing communication to connect and engage with fans. (Stavros, Pope, & Winzar: 17(3)).

Jenkins formulated that when speaking about fan audiences and sports audiences, we have to separate the sports fans from the rest of the media fans. Talking about sports audiences also implies gender. In studies conducted from a male perspective, women are typically included in social connections. According to the theory that female sports fans are drawn to spending time with their families and friends, women are portrayed as the partners of male sports fans (Clark & Paechter, 2007: 12(3), 261-276).

The sports audience was initially framed on a “place-based “framework (Rowe, 2011: pp. 509–526). As established earlier, as technologies grew and gained importance in households, the television became a central “tool member” of families. It allowed spectatorship from home and promised that the experience of a sports event through television could be considered ‘better’ than physically in the actual event (Rowe, 2011) and (Whannel, 2005).

At this period, two types of ‘audiences’ were established: the one who was physically assisting with the event and the other who was not physically engaging in real time but through a device and considered maybe more passive. The author frames the sports audience as spectators through a device such as the television, and the spectators are physically present in the real-time event. (Rowe, 2011: 509-526).

Sports audiences are not just a quantifying process but a mobilisation process. (O'Regan, Balnaves, & Sternberg, 2002: 10-65). Nowadays, participating in a sports audience is considered an inevitable series of media engagements and seems mandatory, as opposed to “before” participating in a sports audience, which was considered a voluntary and optional act (Rowe, 2011: 509-526).

Boyle (2009) established that the spectator audience of sports is the majority of men, and it has been studied like that. As Morse advances in his work, the sport's audience is through a male gaze, often destined for male viewerships. (Morse, 1992) & (Messner, 1995). As the data from a study from Statista revealed, the share of sports fans in the United States by gender in April 2023 was for casual male fans at 42% and casual female fans at 50%. This shows a shifting audience regarding sports and the involvement in *social media* around those topics. (Sports fans by gender US 2023 | Statista. (2023, July 12).

Audience engagement and perception in sports media studies allow us to engage with content and understand how viewers interpret it, are influenced by it, and use different-

-paradigms. As Hall and McQuail's work shows and argues, communication models are changing from linear to circular, highlighting audience interactions related to factors such as background and culture and challenging passive reception.

Nevertheless, engagement and audience perception have significantly evolved, mainly influenced by communication models and technology shifts. As McQuail and Carey argued, the audience as a collective entity is shaped by the media they consume. However, over time, this notion of understanding has evolved and expanded with the advent of technologies, which have introduced more complex models of audience interaction; one of them is cultural communication, which brings to light the diversity of interactions through audiences as active engagement.

This evolution of media operations concerning the sports area has demonstrated that audiences are not inflexible and rigid but rather dynamic and more fragmented, and that involves a targeted engagement for strategies. This highlights the importance of comprehending the many origins and driving forces that shape spectator behaviour. As Livingstone and Walmsley argued, the audience is active and plural. We must acknowledge that fact, especially in the spirit area, where the fan's emotional connection and loyalty are crucial in shaping audience engagement.

4.3 Discussing Audience

Audience perception in sports refers to how the fan perceives and interprets the different actions and messages diffused across the other platforms and broadcasts. Perception and engagement are shaped by different factors, from personal background to media perception, the various social interactions an individual can have, and the cultural context in which he is evolving.

Audience engagement is more about the interaction between the entities involved. We have two sorts of engagement: passive engagement, which means consuming sports content through a social network platform or watching a *Grand Prix* through television, and active engagement, which is more 'real', meaning attending the events, addressing, and communicating with their *social media*, or even buying merchandise related to the sports.

The Engagement Theory mainly focuses on the prominent importance of immersive experiences and the importance of interactivity fostering engagement. For them, the more interactive fans are and the more relevant personally for the fan, the more the engagement will be impacted significantly. That theory is observed in *Formula One* as platforms like *Instagram* provide virtual connections and experiences through fan engagement that is increasingly personalised through algorithms and immersive ways to connect with sports content directly and indirectly. (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1998: 20-23).

That different aspect and understanding of the audience perception and engagement toward sports is a pillar aspect for sports organisations because of the strategic communication. Marketing and revenue are also implied for the company to adapt its communication. After all, understanding engagement and what is driving it helps organisations shape their strategies and marketing campaigns. Finally, loyalty and community are addressed because understanding interaction and perception can help foster loyalty in the fan base and a strong sense of community building (Calder et al., 2009: 321-331). Overall, audience engagement and perception in sports are decisive as they shape fans' interpretations of content on different platforms. Factors such as the degree of media exposure, cultural context, and personal background impact and influence this perception.

Another critical theory related to the role of *social media* in audience engagement is the social presence theory, which concerns the individual experience through mediated communication and how media and interactivity influence the feeling of closeness (Short, Williams & Christie, 1976: 147). The features proposed by *social media* allow them to enhance their presence and create interpersonal communication. This enhanced interactivity is permitted through *social media* platforms and the facilitation of communication. (Biocca, Harms & Burgoon, 2003: 456-480).

However, audience engagement is touching and about passive and active participation and consumption, and the theory that allows us to understand how fans are connected and identify themselves through sport is framed by the use and gratifications theory and engagement theory. Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch's Uses and Gratification Theory apply to sports: The audience and fans engage with the different contents to fulfil a need that can be connected (with a community), excitement/ adrenaline (delivered by the joy of watching sports), personal relevance, or search of identity through the support of tablets or teams. (Katz, Blumler, &

-Gurevitch,1973: 509-523.) The Social Identity theory also impacts and shapes fans' perception and engagement. Fans identify with the sport and athletes they support; even if they are unsuccessful, whether they succeed or not, their identification fosters emotion, connections, and loyalty. These identifications directly impact the fans' perceptions and engagement (Wann & Branscombe, 1993: 1-17).

4.4 Measuring Audience

Different strategies are prioritised when it comes to fan engagement. Firstly, we have *Social Media* Engagement through various platforms and interactive actions on *social media* platforms, aiming to start conversations, share behind-the-scenes, and propose interactive content (Mangold & Faulds, 2009: 357-365). Secondly, another strategy for interacting and generating fan engagement is gamification, which incorporates some elements connected to games into the fan experiences. Some simple examples are contests, challenges, and even reward programs. (Gaming, 1999). Personalised content plays a role in tailoring the content adapted to each fan's preferences, which is allowed through the data metrics and analysis segmentation. (Kumar& Venkatesan, 2005: 44-62).

Fan Communities and Forums promote fan communication and engagement by creating online communities and discussion boards devoted to the club or sport. (Sayan, & Aksan, 2020: 357-377). Virtual Occasions and Encounters helped to organise online events like interactive fan meet-ups, virtual watch parties, and live *Q&A* sessions with coaches and players. (Filo, Lock, & Karg, 2015: 166-181). User-generated content (UGC) encourages supporters to produce and disseminate original images, videos, and fan art associated with the club or sport. (Trusov, Bucklin, & Pauwels, 2009: 90-102). So, the strategies around fan engagement encompass different approaches that all aim to foster connections and interactions between sports entities and fans. *Social media* can be considered ad engagement initiatives to start conversations and post exclusive content. (Mangold & Faulds, 2009: 357-365).

As *social media* platforms have impacted audience engagement strategies, providing different platforms has made engaging directly with the audience easier. They have enabled the audience to fulfil social and psychological needs through content consumption. (Katz et al.,-

-1973; Muntinga et al., 2011). The different theories demonstrate that *social media* empowers companies and organisations by aligning their audiences' needs and preferences with their communication strategies, allowing them to engage and be loyal.

As the factors of active participation, investment, and emotional involvement are essential to effective engagements, the fans can have a stronger feeling of belonging and identify themselves through their interactions inside the social groups. Moreover, as the audience is less and less passive consumers, they are tending to be more active through the different aspects that are showing how *social media* gives businesses the ability to better match their communication tactics to the requirements and preferences of their audience, which in turn improves engagement and fosters loyalty.

To have criteria for evaluation and effectiveness in each field, we need tools to measure this, and audience engagement is not making an exception. The Flow theory in the digital media context is reached when the users are considered absolved and in deep immersion in activity with the content. This deep state in content leads to the highest rate of engagement. With this measurement, the 'flow' reports on factors such as goals and feedback (immediate). (Czikszentmihalyi, 1990: 75-77).

The metrics are essential, both from a behavioural point of view, such as the likes, shares, and comments that are about direct interaction, and also the Click-Through Rates (CTR), the time spent on a page, and the percentage of visitors who are just leaving after seeing one page, which is the bounce rate. Follower growth and engagement rate are indicators of content effectiveness and growth. We also have emotional metrics that are more focused on sentiment, such as the language used in comments or the direct feedback collected through surveys. The cognitive metrics are more about the recognition of the users. More composite metrics are used by organisations that often scrutinise the engagement rate. A more qualitative method uses interviews and focus groups or open survey questions that allow users to give their opinions and feedback in their own words with a border of questions.

Monitoring data, including fan surveys, website traffic, and *social media* interactions, is necessary for audience participation. Different tracking and logician systems, analysis tools, and analytics platforms offer more profound insight into how people connect with the material.

The sports team's *social media* marketing case study demonstrates how well these tactics increase fan interaction and offers a template for similar initiatives in the future.

In order to be able to measure audience engagement effectively, companies and organisations are using different tools and metrics such as the glow theory, which is tools that indicate the immersion in the content leading to a higher engagement, the behavioural metrics (likes, comments) that provide essential data on the direct interaction and the follower's growth and engagement rates that are indicating the effectiveness of content and its audience growth.

To measure the ethnonational metrics, it is about the feeling through the languages, surveys as the cognitive metrics are based and focused on the size recall and recognition, through the qualities methods known through focus groups or interviews that are proving and offer deeper insight about the opinions of the user and give measurable data. Moreover, monitoring those data through, for example, *social media* interaction or website traffic is crucial to understanding the audience's engagement. In conclusion, an intersection of qualitative and quantitative techniques is needed to measure audience involvement in digital media. These tools are essential for honing engagement tactics and building closer relationships with supporters, ensuring successful public relations.

Part II-Research Design
Chapter 5-Research Design

5.1 Research Methods and Objectives

In the context of Media Life and the field of media sports, communications and public relations need to be approached. The goal is to understand how public relations approaches audiences on *social media*.

One of the motivations for writing this dissertation on this specific subject is that, firstly, *Formula One* is one of my passions. I was determined to explore more of this *social media* and digital life. I aim to work in sports communication, so the combination was a perfect opportunity for me.

The *Formula One* sphere is a tight and vague area, but exploring and researching it within the framework of social science and communication was interesting. Throughout the process, I have defined and examined different topics on *Netflix's Drive to Survive* docuseries, which I wanted to investigate first. However, my research had evolved, and I decided to focus on *Formula One Instagram* communication strategies and their impact.

The exploration of *Instagram* and its use by teams and the audience highlighted the crucial role of platforms in social sports communication and the *Formula One* sphere. This topic interests fans, audiences, sports organisations, and, specifically, the *Formula One* world. Remembering that the field of communication studies is a relevant topic for scholars. The research problem of this study is “What are the methods employed by *Formula One* teams to leverage their *social media* presence, specifically focusing on platforms such as *Instagram*, to foster audience engagement, and what are the resultant effects of these strategic initiatives?”

A case study content analysis was conducted to best answer this dissertation's purpose, combining two objects in sports communications. To better understand the *Formula One* strategy on *social media*, such as *Instagram*, and the impacts of those strategies on the *Formula One* field. This investigation upholds and emphasises the importance of the strategy applied by *Formula One* to disseminate content on *social media* through the dimensions of topics and teams, as well as their strategy and the use of storytelling and narratives. To understand and explore the public engagement with teams and how the strategy applied by *Formula One*-

-fosters loyalty between the audiences and teams; To explore how *social media* strategies are linked to content and other activities of *Formula One*; and finally, the public relations alignment.

So, through a content analysis of two selected teams, this research will be conducted for one month.

The selected teams have been chosen based on their range in the competition; *McLaren* is a mid-range team (during the 2023 year, but is currently changing through the 2024 championship), and *Ferrari* is one of the head and lead teams (same for the Italian team, this championship 2024 is through and they are not at the front row).

Their *social media* weight also ranks themes: *Ferrari* has 15,8 million followers on *Instagram*, and *McLaren* has 14 Million (*Instagram*, data from August 2024).

Regarding the time frame decided on one month and why the February month specifically, it made sense as the calendar of *Formula One* knows a ‘winter break’ going on from mid-December to the first week of March. The teams are starting to test the new car and revelling it during the February month, being active more on *social media* such as *Instagram*; it is making sense to analyse this period going on from the first of February 2024 until the third of March 2024. The amount of data collected was massive and coherent regarding this research.

Content analysis was well suited for studying and being able to interpret communication content, especially concerning the *Formula One* context on *social media* strategies of teams, as the content analysis focuses on identity and understanding topics, subjects and strategies that the team are using in the *Instagram* platform. as it allows the systematic identification of topic and themes through a structure and a systematic examination of a vital volume of data. By categorising the content of *Formula One* teams, these methods allow for discovering patterns in how teams communicate and classifying them through categories. Examining the time-frequency, timing and context of posts highlight the teams' strategic decisions in communicating. For example, the content analysis sheds light on how the team uses specific context ties ((Krippendorff, 2018: 24-86). to engage with audiences, such as the first race weekend of the year.’ (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005: 1277-1288). Thus, the content analysis offers perceptions of the strategic factors influencing the teams' communication endeavours.

Even if the intent analysis's primary and first focus is on identifying and categorising content, it also provides a structure for understanding how those different elements impact the audience.

Content analysis assists in evaluating the efficacy of various tactics in promoting audience interaction by connecting the identified content categories (e.g., post types, themes) with engagement metrics (e.g., likes, comments, shares). (Neuendorf,2017:201-241).

5.2 Methods and Strategies

This research intends to understand the communicative practices used by *Formula One* teams to leverage their social media presence and foster audience engagement on Instagram.

The research problem is what strategies the *Formula One* team employed to leverage their social media presence and foster an audience on *Instagram*.

To answer this significant question, I have the following objectives.

- *Formula One's* strategy is to disseminate content on *social media* through the dimensions of topics and teams. To Identify topics and content and disseminate messages on *social media* by the teams.
- To understand their strategy and the use of storytelling and narratives.
- To understand and explore public engagement with teams and how *Formula One's* strategy fosters loyalty between audiences and teams.
- To explore how *social media* strategies are linked to content and other activities of *Formula One*.
- To connect the practices to theories of public relations.

The chosen method to conduct this study was qualitative, constructing a study case with two objectives: the study of team strategies on *social media* and the impacts on the audience through the conducted content analysis. This qualitative research uses exploratory sports, communication, and *social media* research. One mention needs to be made that this is not a comparative study; the goal is not to compare teams but to analyse how they are processing. The case studies concern the communications sciences. This study brings together two leading teams in *Formula One*, their strategies, and how they approach audiences. The chosen method was qualitative, firstly because of the depth of understanding provided by this method. This type of method is well-suited for the researcher who tries to understand specific context details. Qualitative research enables a detailed exploration of organisational practices and human behaviours. (Denzin, & Lincoln, 1996: 132). This current research is-

-allowing me as the aimed is to understand and interpret the *social media* strategies of two chosen *Formula One* team and their impact on the audience; it provides the depth that we needed to shed light on the practices of the teams as well as providing contextual factors that shaped their different strategies. (Patton, 2014: 45-83).

The nature of this study is explorative, as it investigates the *social media* strategies of the *Formula One* team. This subject is studied but not extensively in the scholars' area. Regarding the context, the qualitative method is more than suitable. When discussing exploratory studies, the qualitative methods aim to highlight and identify themes and patterns and provide new insights (Yin, 2018: 33-70). It will also help this research to discover new perspectives and strategies that the quantitative methods might not have provided and captured. (Creswell, & Poth, 2016: 73-81).

Social media are deeply rooted and embedded in cultures, especially in specific cultural, organisational, and temporal contexts. The qualitative method also allows the researcher to consider broader content where strategies are developed and executed. (Bryman, 2016: 147-170). For this current study, I will enable the interpretation of different aspects of factors such as brand identity, team culture, and the ongoing events influenced by the *Formula One* team's *social media* approaches and the audience's reaction (Maxwell, 2012: 139-159).

As this research is also based on an adaptive approach, flexibility and adaptability are crucial. Qualitative research allows the research design to evolve as new data emerge. This will enable the analysis adjustment due to the unpredictable nature of *social media* content and audience engagement (Tracy, 2024: 256-282).

Regarding the conducted focus on two *Formula One* teams, the case study was chosen due to its alignment with the different research objectives and the nature of the subject under investigation. Qualitative methods are advantageous for case studies because they provide in-depth, contextualised insights into a few examples. (Stake, 1995: 15-60). So, through the content analysis, the exploration of each team is allowed, as well as their unique *social media* strategy and the nuanced impact on their audiences. Stake emphasises the case study method. (Stake, 2013: 20-34).

As the content analysis is centred on the analysis of the two *Formula One* teams on *social media*, the qualitative method effectively interprets the meaning behind the *social media* posts, including the understanding that often involves implicit messages, tone, or strategic-

-content. The qualitative content analysis allows for a profound analysis and examination of some underlying communication and goes far beyond the more profound significance of the messages. This approach favours the interpretation of *social media* content and is crucial to this research to catch the complexity of the *Formula One* team's audiences' perception and communication. (Hsieh, & Shannon, 2005: 1277-1288).

To understand its impact, the audience involves qualitative methods, as the interpretation, engagement, and response senses are inaccessible and are the most straightforward data to quantify. Social interactions and perceptions are more well-suited to study this aspect as they allow the analysis of the audience's responses to the *Formula One* team's *social media* strategies. (Silverman, 2017: 144-158). Through this content analysis, the examination of comments, likes, and some forms of interaction will be examined, allowing us to draw nuanced conclusions about the effectiveness of the strategies. (Kozinets, 2010: 1-13). The content analysis of two *Formula One* teams generates essential data. Qualitative research generates rich and detailed data that allow us to capture the complexity of *social media* interactions and strategies. As this sports environment is competitive, the method must be suited to support strong descriptions of social phenomena. (Charmaz, 2014: 22-35).

As explained above, this research is a case study combining two objects: strategy and audience impacts. It is a deep analysis of two distinct *Formula One* teams on *Instagram* over a month.

The focus was on examining the content published by those teams and the amount of commentary to gain a perspective on the strategies used by the teams to communicate on *social media* and their reach to the audience. For different aspects and reasons, the decision was made to classify this research as a case study, especially a multiple case study.

The first reason is that as it is a multiple-case design, the structure of this study implies analysing two entities: *Formula One Instagram* account. This design is beneficial for dressing up different cases to explore patterns and strategies and construct analyses (Stake, 2013: 20-34) & (Yin, 2018: 33-70). To have the opportunity to analyse two teams (two cases), this study will have a broader and richer understanding of the different strategies and possible benefits without comparing them, as the aim is not a comparative study but to bring together two teams of the *Formula One* field and how they use *social media* to approach new audiences. This will allow me to identify similarities and differences. Regarding the explorative nature of this-

-research, case studies are suited for this research where the goal is to have a more extensive and developed understanding of complex context; it will be more evident to research IV media subtleties strategies and allow nuc (Stake, 1995: 15-60). The study's designation as a case study is further supported by examining the likes, comments, and content. Understanding each team's audience interactions and how their content appeals to fans depends on these factors. Flyvbjerg (2006) asserts that case studies are adequate resources for comprehending the intricacies of individual situations, especially when addressing modern phenomena like *social media* involvement. (Flyvbjerg, 2006: 219-245). As this study focuses on two distinct cases, it will allow the examination of contextual factors that can affect and influence the *social media* team strategies. This agrees with the theoretical framework of the case study, which holds that context significantly influences the phenomenon being studied (Yin, 2018: 55-70).

Through the content analysis of those accounts, it was analysed through different categories such as the following categories (followed during the whole content analysis): Main topic, Publication time, Content, Label, Visual strategy, Visual Field, Extra Element (with or without music, filters, montage, video), fans' reactions, Comments under publication, and Likes. Those two last categories were completed each following day.

5.3 Sample and Research Techniques

The research wants to understand *Formula One's* strategy on *social media*, such as *Instagram*, and its impacts on the *Formula One* field. This investigation upholds and emphasises the importance of *Formula One's* strategy to disseminate content on *social media* through the dimensions of topics and teams, their strategy and the use of storytelling and narratives. The technique used to answer this objective was the description of *social media* observation of each team's content.

Formula One has adopted refined strategies to amplify its digital presence. Sports organisations leverage *social media* to build communities, increase brand value, and engage with fans. (Billings, Broussard, Xu, & Xu, 2019: 630-652). Moreover, this is being done by analysing different content types, going from behind the scenes, real-time updates, and fan interactions, which are all factors to get audiences engaged in sport and invested in it.

Storytelling in sports media is an effective strategy and way to create 'emotional' connections between different entities, such as fans, teams, and athletes. (Smith & Smith, 2012: 539-557). The descriptive method aims to complete this objective by focusing on observing the *social media* content of two *Formula One* teams. The descriptive method emphasises that descriptive observations are a practical and valuable technique used in qualitative research, mostly when the objective is to have a deemed and nuanced undertaking of social patterns in their natural context. (Creswell, & Poth, 2016: 73-81).

Furthermore, the idea of "networked publics," as explored by Boyd (2010), can be connected to the purposeful use of *Instagram* by the *Formula One* team to provide material and engage with fans. The online areas where audiences congregate, communicate, and exchange content are known as 'networked public'," and the platform's affordances impact these places. *Formula One's* use of *Instagram* is an example of how sports leagues may use networked publics to expand their reach, create communities, and change how fans perceive them. (Boyd, 2010: 47-66).

Observations were also crucial to understanding and exploring public engagement with items. The observational techniques were pivotal to this as they allowed the capture of nuances of the audience's interaction with content, going on from the likes, comments, and shares, which are crucial indicators (Bryman, 2016: 147-170). Additionally, research by Marwick (2013), who examined how *social media* users interact with information and form relationships with brands, gives credit to the observational method. In the context of *Formula One*, a lot can be learned about how well the teams' *social media* strategies encourage fan loyalty and engagement by seeing how fans interact with various content, from race highlights to behind-the-scenes pieces. (Marwick, 2013: 163-345).

The way *Formula One* fosters loyalty between audiences and teams was analysed through the content analysis collection of data and observation of it. The focus was made on the observation of the comments and likes. The *social media* platform is crucial in fostering loyalty between teams and audiences. This technique was followed as studies have shown that strategic use of *social media* in the sports sphere is connected to increased fan engagement and loyalty. (Parganas, Anagnostopoulos, & Chadwick, 2015: 551-568). Their approach highlights-the importance of the content, firstly by inviting fans and asking them to be involved in the team.

Furthermore, that is being observed in this research as the *Formula One* team is using interactive elements such as publications, stories, and lives... those elements are analysed to have the strength to solidify the reaction between the team and fans. The study investigated how these tactics promoted fan loyalty and a stronger emotional bond with the teams by examining the posts' themes, storylines, and interactive components.

Finally, the objective of the public relations alignment was determined by observing the post and assisting with the literature review. The abuse of the *Instagram* platform's content, messages, topics, and interactions will allow us to understand how the two aligned teams align their broader objectives with public relations strategies. In order to guarantee that all content intended for public consumption upholds the organisation's objectives and overarching brand identity, public relations must be in harmony with communication strategy. (Grunig, & Grunig, 2013: 285-325). This study used these guidelines to examine how *Formula One* teams use *social media* to interact with their fans and keep their messaging consistent across different channels. The analysis also addresses the point of integrated marketing communications (IMC) to explore the effect of uniformisation and harmonisation on public relations with different activities. (Cornelissen, 2023: 32-52).

As the two analysed teams in this research are *Ferrari* and *McLaren*, the content analysis theory is functional when the need arises to analyse *social media* over a long period, such as here a month, by categorising and codifying different *Instagram* aspects, such as types of content, formats, frequency, themes, topics, and engagement metrics such as likes and comments. (Krippendorff, 2018: 24-86.)

As the research also concerns the audience, *social media* strategy engagement theory is crucial in analysing the strategies identified through the content analysis impact audience engagement. This study can assess the content resonance with their followers by analysing likes, comments, and other interactions. Nevertheless, it is also explorative of how narrative elements with the content contribute to the emotional connection and foster loyalty. Understanding the efficiency of various kinds of content in engaging audiences is essential for comprehending the broader implications of *Formula One's social media* initiatives, and this theory aids in explaining this. (Brodie, Ilic, Juric, & Hollebeek, 2013: 105-114).

The combination of content analysis and *social media* engagement theory gives an approach to understanding the *Formula One* team's strategies and the audience's engagement and impact on *Instagram*. The content analysis provides a detailed and systematic examination of the team's-

-content, highlighting the strategy and themes. On the other hand, *social media* engagement helps to create context for those findings by connecting them with responses and engagement metrics. With its theoretical foundation and practical research, this dual method provides the study with insightful information about the dynamic relationship between audience engagement and content development in *social media*.

Also, during the content analysis, a scale of observations was defined to measure the success of engagement and audience interaction.

Table 1- Summary of the assigned Numerical Values to the engagement levels:

Engagement levels	Numerical Assigned Values
Low	1
Medium	2
Engaged	3
Medium/ Engaged	2,5
High	4
Engaged/ High	3,5
Really High	5

To conclude, The defined and observed sample is the *Instagram* accounts of two identified teams, *McLaren* and *Ferrari*.

Those teams were chosen because we needed to analyse two different teams that were not in the same range in the competition. Thus, one top squad and one mid-range team were selected. It was more coherent regarding this research to study two teams that are not in the same competition range (sports speaking).

The content analysis time frame was from February 1st, 2024, to March 2nd, 2024. So, each day, the two *Instagram* accounts from each publication posted on the feed were observed, as well as stories and fans' reactions to the feed publications.

During the analysed period, which was analysed daily, the two teams communicated a lot because it was pre-season, revealing the car and the start of the season all in the same period.

The strategy used to analyse was to observe each day the main topic, the publication time, the content, the label (and use of hashtags), the visual strategy, the visual field, whether extra elements were used, fans' reactions, and the number of comments under publications and likes.

After the content analysis, it was time to synthesise and transcribe the results in two charts, one for each team during March.

For this transcript, the aim was to condense all the data collected as that was heavy and many data collected.

Regarding the information and data collected during the content analysis, I informed the teams through *social media* and emails that I was studying them in the framework of my dissertation and that what would be collected would be used only in the frame and purpose of this study, and that it would be later published in the repository of the *Universidade Catolica de Lisboa*.

Another aspect that benefits *Formula One* is the real-time insights *social media* provides, which allows them to communicate results directly on their *social media*, such as *Instagram*. So, the real-time updates and new content where fans can stay informed are positive sights. Data analysis and insights collection through *social media* analytics tools are essential to collect what fans and audiences currently prefer and engagement metrics for the marketing first to construct the strategy and content. Data-driven approaches help teams optimise their *social media* presence, tailor content to specific audience segments, and measure the impact of their digital initiatives. Thus, *social media's* influence has changed the *Formula One* experience by making the sport more accessible to a broader audience, encouraging fan interaction, and giving teams and drivers more ability to communicate with fans worldwide. *Social media* will continue to be essential to *Formula One's* communication strategy as the digital landscape develops, spurring fan engagement and innovation in the sport.

Chapter 6-Presentation and discussion of collected data

6.1 Presentation of teams

We must introduce the two analysed teams before going deeper into the collected data analysis.

Firstly, the *Ferrari* company saw the light of day in 1939 when its creator and owner, *Enzo Ferrari*, decided to start a racing team named *Alfa Romeo*. This team became the well-known *Scuderia Ferrari* in 1947, right after the tumultuous period of the Second World War. Nowadays, the team is one of the most iconic remaining members of the circuit and also one of the most successful in motorsport history.

In the brand's DNA, we find the innovation, passion, and excellence that have allowed *Ferrari* to establish itself through its reach legacy as one of the most powerhouses of *Formula One* racing.

Nevertheless, the Italian team is going beyond the excitement of the races, the technology and success they are getting on track, and their presence extends to the digital realm. The *Ferrari* team, known as the *Scuderia Ferrari*, engages with millions of fans through its various platforms. The team is present on *Twitter*, now known as *X*, *Instagram*, *Facebook*, *YouTube*, and *TikTok* (Fans, 2021: 19).

Among those platforms, *Instagram* is a pivotal channel through which *Ferrari* connects with its global fan base.

On this platform, *Ferrari*, known as *Scuderia Ferrari*, offers fans exclusive content, from a glimpse into their inner working team (behind the scenes) to visuals created by their social content team. The content includes behind-the-scenes updates, life events updates, developments, and general updates.

Regarding some metrics of the team's *Instagram* account, the team is followed by 14.7 million people on *Instagram*. (data reported on the 21st of April 2024) and (<https://www.instagram.com/scuderiaferrari/>)

Through a strategic and organised approach to storytelling and content creation, *Ferrari's Instagram* account generates and leverages engagement to cultivate a sense of-

-community among fans and foster loyalty beyond the circuit. Along with the following data description, we will delve into *Ferrari's* team's presence on *social media* on *Instagram* by exploring the team's communication strategies, the impact of their digital endeavour on audience perception and interaction, and their engagement tactics. Choosing to work on *Instagram* with the aim and the will to gain insight into one of the iconic teams present in motor and also the top range that is traversing the digital landscape to connect with fans, generate passion and excitement for the sport of *Formula One* in general, and try to gain support from another perspective.

On the other hand, The *McLaren* team was founded in 1963 by *Bruce McLaren*, a New Zealander who was a driver. The team has always been strongly linked and synonymous with excellence, innovation and pursuing success on the circuit.

The team has remained a strong force in the motorsport world through traverse times and championships, and many victories and legendary drivers have characterised it.

In today's digital landscape, the team is extending as far as the *Ferrari* is from the race circuits. As they are concurrent, they are present on different *social media* platforms such as *X*, *TikTok*, *YouTube*, *Facebook*, and *Instagram*.

Through these different platforms, the team is present and has made a point of engaging with fans worldwide. This study focuses on *Instagram*, the latest *social media* site mentioned.

Through *Instagram*, the team offers immersive experience content and unity for their fans through behind-the-scenes content that allows a deep look into the *Formula One* world and life news related to the sport and the team.

The team efficiently gives fans access to the team drivers and the people behind the team, such as the engineers, mechanics, team drivers, and cars; captivating visuals, exclusive content, and storytelling interactivity allow all of that.

Regarding the metrics of the *McLaren* team, especially the number of followers they have, they are followed by 12.8 million followers (data reported on the 21st of April 2024) and (<https://www.instagram.com/scuderiaferrari/>).

McLaren uses a strategic approach to content creation, which is strongly linked to community engagement. They are leveraging *Instagram* to foster connection and community among fans, going far beyond geographical boundaries and uniting the passionate to share their passion (through engagement and user-generated content).

The *McLaren* team will also be one of the examiners through the following data description. We will explore their *social media* strategy on Instagram by analysing the team's communication tactics, engagement metrics, and the impact of their digital strategy on audience perception and interaction.

Using this example of *McLaren* and *Ferrari's Instagram* presence, the aim is to gain insight into two essential players in the *Formula One* world and examine the weight and power of *social media* to drive excitement and passion for sport and how *social media* connects with fans.

Table 2- Summary of metrics of the two Instagram teams analysed: @Mclaren and @scuderiaferrari

	<i>McLaren</i>	<i>Ferrari</i>
Number of followers	12, 849, 064 <u>+241, 106 (1,9 %)</u>	14, 783, 083 <u>+ 465, 800 (3,3 %)</u>
Engagement rate	1,22 %	0,73%
Like average	156,8 K	121, 078 K
Comments average	198	286
Comments rate	0,17	0,24
Weekly post number	109	102
Followers' growth rate (90 days)	8,69 %	14,09 %

Sources used for this table: Hype Auditor- Analytics (2024, April). HypeAuditor.

Instagram Analytics – InsTrack.App. (n.d.) (2024, April). InsTrack.

Concerning the underlined data, the percentage explains the amount gained when the data were collected in April for this table.

6.2 Data Description

As mentioned in the methodological chapter, the content analysis took place over 31 days, from *February 1, 2024*, to *March 2, 2024*.

Ferrari and *McLaren's Instagram* accounts have been analysed (the initial content analysis and a summary are in the appendix).

So, here is a short overview of the collected data for the analysed period for *McLaren*: *McLaren* posted **205 publications** on their feed. The video format reached **81 videos**, the carousel format **72 videos**, and **66 pictures**. All of those data concern the publication of their feed. For the story on the analysed period, they posted a total of **239 stories**.

On the other hand, we have the other analysed team, *Ferrari*, which can seem lighter regarding communications (that will be mentioned in the following part). Their total feed publications are **193 publications**, comprising **79 videos**, **68 carrousels**, and **46 pictures**.

About the stories, they posted **93 stories** for the analysed period.

The first aspect analysed and described in this section concerns *Formula One's* strategies for disseminating content on *social media* through different dimensions; the first concerns the teams and topics spoken about and used by the teams.

One of the categories analysed was the topics aboard by the teams, and it was observed that it allowed the teams to disseminate content.

So, regarding the topic addressed by teams, why is a similarity, we can see on the first two days of each team's publications:

On day one, *McLaren* discusses teasing and promotion for the new race car reveal and the upcoming season, and *Ferrari* speaks the same topic the next day, so on day two of February. Both are using strategies to speak about different perspectives to promote this topic. (through drivers, fans and cars)

Still, regarding the first day of analysis (February 1st, 2024), noon is used at the same time as starting to post. Regarding the caption, in almost every publication on their feed, *McLaren* used an *Emoji*, and *Ferrari* did the same thing but less often than them, only in some posts.

As mentioned, they use an extra element in their publications: they add the location and identification of the individuals present in the content, mainly the drivers.

6.3 Strategies of *Formula One* to disseminate content on social media

Table 3 - Content topics of the team

Team content subject McLaren			Team content subject Ferrari		
Day	Topic	Number of publications per day	Day	Topic	Number of publications per day
1/02/2024	Teasing of the new car reveal and upcoming season.	6	2/02/2024	Teasing of the new car reveal and upcoming season.	3
17/02/2024	Backstage of the photoshoot.	2	11/02/2024	Backstage of the new season photoshoot	3
21/02/2024	Promotion of testing day 1.	15	21/02/24	Promotion of testing day 1.	14
22/02/2024	Promotion of testing day 2.	9	22/02/2024	Promotion of testing day 2.	13
23/02/2024	Promotion of testing day 3.	8	23/02/2024	Promotion of testing day 3.	14

Firstly, the teams are communicating toward the same objectives: promoting the brand, sustaining it and commercialising it.

Both teams use the platform to disseminate content by aligning their brand identities and *social media* to engage a global audience.

In this research, we can observe that the fans of *Ferrari* and *McLaren* on the *Instagram* platform to complete and satisfy a need and interest in the *Formula One* sport but also their interest in the different teams, such as behind-the-scenes team updates content and to let this need teams are using a different content format such as videos, carrousel pictures and other interactive elements that are fulfilling the needs of the audience.

As it was observed in the content analysis, both teams were speaking about showing their new cars, the first race of the new season, and it is the way media shapes the public agenda by putting on stage-specific topics such as the reveal of the new car or first race of the season.

We can observe that teams set the agenda for their audiences by putting and highlighting some significant events on the front stage framed by the Agenda Setting Theory. About this, the timing and content are scheduled and designed to keep that topic in the minds of their audience, to make them think of it. (McCombs & Shaw, 1972: 176-187).

Nevertheless, other subjects mentioned were the drivers, behind the scenes with them, team leaders, the people who are part of *Ferrari*, the promotion of the new cars, challenges, and a report on the testing and races from different perspectives.

Teams tend to humanise their drivers and the people behind the scenes and behind each team's motivation, which the audience can interpret as closure and sensible. As studied through the Social Identity Theory, that is putting the individuals and allowing them to identify with the drivers and team more closely, strengthening fans' sense of belonging in the group; in the *Formula One* case, it is reinforcing the fan's sense of belonging to the driver's fanbase and to the teams. (Tajfel, & Turner, 1979: 33-47).

Consistency and regularity of posts can be linked to habit formation; it is suggested that consistent behaviour and time can lead to a habit formation of *social media*, such as the *Ferrari* team or *McLaren* team posting on a consistent schedule and time frame is helping the user to form a habitual engagement pattern. By the strategy of posting content regularly, the user can anticipate when new content will be realised and expect it. This reinforces engagement and community building through loyal engagement toward the team. (Kennedy, & Funk, 2023: 187-201.)

The time frame and Table 13 of Appendix 7 of the content analysis show that the team has been vigilant about consistency and timing, one aspect of communication theory.

One established observation is that the Italian team *Ferrari* posted more on weekdays than *McLaren* posted more on weekends; that is a general observation. The importance of context and timing in communication with the *Interpersonal Communication Theory*. In this case, if the team publishes at an "optimal" timing, it ensures that it can reach the audience more actively, increasing engagement and solidifying relational links (Walther, 2011: 4, 443-479.).

Table 4- *McLaren and Ferrari Instagram is humanising the team in two ways.*

McLaren Instagram is humanising the team in two ways.	
Through fans	Through the teams (workers)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compared to <i>Ferrari</i>, none of the posts posted during the analysed period were about fans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 04/02: Headquarters of McLaren with a sunset through a video. 177 comments 100 044 K likes This is the fifth publication of the day. 05/02: Video of Pirelli tires. 143 comments and 209 K likes. This was the first publication of the day. 10/02: Carrousel of the team in testing days in Barcelona. 126 comments and 98,7 K. This is the first post of the day. 10/02: Video of the backstage photo shoot with the communication team and drivers. 418 comments and 95,4 K likes. This is the fifth publication of the day. 19/02: Carrousel of the team building their garage and headquarters in Bahrain. 61 comments and 48,8 K Likes. This is the first publication of the day. 19/02: Video of the garage (backstage) in Bahrain. 107 comments and 60,6 K Likes. This is the third publication of the day. 20/02: Carrousel photo of the free practice of the day before from an insights point of view. 61 comments and 34,1 K Likes. This is the first publication of the day. 21/02: Video of Oscar Piastri with his mechanics for the first day of testing and him leaving the garage in his car. 110 comments and 120 K Likes. This is the fourth publication of the day.

Through fans	Through the teams (workers)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23/02: Carrousel pictures of team drivers in the garage with mechanics. 98 comments and 79,5 K Likes. This is the first publication of the day. • 23/02: Montage picture of Oscar Piastrri with staff member and car. 19 comments and 38,4 K Likes. This is the second publication of the day. • 28/02: Carrousel montage of mechanics in the garage and the pit lane. 29 comments and 21,6 K Likes. This is the fifth publication of the day. • 29/02: Carrousel of the team mechanics in pit lane. 46 comments and 42,9 K Likes. This is the eighth publication of the day. • 1/03: Video of the team from the mechanics to engineering and communication during qualification day. 82 comments and 29,2 K Likes. This is the fifth publication of the day. • 2/03: Picture of the mechanics around the car, working on it. 55 comments and 67,1 K Likes. This is the tenth publication of the day. • 2/03: A video of Andrea Stella (team engineer) speaking with both drivers about the first race. 126 comments and 28,8 K Likes. This is the sixteenth publication of the day.

Ferrari Instagram is humanising the team in two ways.	
Through fans	Through the teams (workers)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2/02: Carrousel publications about the Japanese fans to communicate about the Japanese Grand-Prix contract being renewed in the F1 calendar until 2029. 192 K likes and 360 comments—second post of the day. • 6/02: Carrousel of fans with Carlos Sainz. 220 K and 851 comments. This is the third post of the day. • 6/02: Carrousel of fans expressing their heartfelt anticipation about being reunited soon. 158 K and 340 comments. Fourth post of the day. • 09/02: Picture of Ferrari fans in a crowd, passionately expressing their love for the team. 478 K and 1241 comments. This is the first post of the day. • 10/02: Picture of a fan with a Ferrari flag. 282 K and 290 comments. First publication of the day. • 28/02: Video of Charles Leclerc signing autographs. 79,9 K and 123 comments. The third publication of the day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 08/02: A captivating image showcasing our esteemed tyre sponsor, Pirelli. This post garnered 101 K views and sparked 107 comments, making it the third publication of the day. • 10/02: A dynamic carrousel featuring our dedicated mechanics and the high-performance Pirelli tires. This post received 301 K views and an impressive 677 comments, marking it as the fourth publication of the day. • 12/02: The team's carrousel at Maranello Headquarters with team principal Frédérique Vasseur. 124 K and 219 comments. This is the third post of the day. • 15/02: A picture of the mechanics in action in the pitlane. 117 K and 158 comments. This is the second post of the day. • 16/02: video of Carlos Sainz with mechanics. 767 K and 4465 comments. First post of the day. • 17/02: picture of two mechanics in front of Maranello headquarters circuit. 198 K and 158 comments. 4th post of the day. • 20/02: Pit lane stop video of testing in Bahrain. 145 K and 440 comments. This is the sixth post of the day. • 25/02: Video of the pitlane operation in Bahrain before the year's first race. 57 K and 79 comments. This is the second post of the day.

Those two tables constructed from the collected data show that both teams use the strategy to ‘humanise’ their teams through their drivers and the people behind them.

Table 2, which discusses each team's humanisation strategy, shows that the two teams continue to humanise the team as much as possible by putting the fans, especially *Ferrari*, on stage. *Ferrari* used this strategy throughout the analysed period; they used it six times compared to *McLaren*, who did not use it at all (during the analysed period, of course).

Nevertheless, as observed, both teams use the strategy of humanising through the teams, meaning creating content around the individuals without whom the team would be different: the mechanics, engineers, and communication. These individuals are not usually in the spotlight when we are speaking about *Formula One* sport.

Usually, drivers are on the front stage, the first aspect of the sport.

As we can observe in *Table 2*, this strategy of humanising the driver is aligned with the social identity theory of Tajfael and Turner (1985) because humans, their drivers, and *McLaren* and *Ferrari* foster a sense of community and belonging among their audience. The Social identity theory explains how people categorise themselves as individuals and in different social groups. The fans of the teams start to refer themselves to the drivers and teams; if they can identify with them more quickly, they can identify themselves, which enhances engagement and loyalty. (Tajfel Tajfel, & Turner, 1985: 6-24).

During the analysed period, the teams communicated in creating content for the different teams' actors; *Ferrari* used the amazing team's strategy through actors eight times and *McLaren* 15 times from February 1st, 2024, to March 2nd, 2024. As mentioned above, the *McLaren* team did not use the fans' perspective to communicate their higher amount. Still, the *Ferrari* team communicated six times around the fans' perspectives to humanise the team.

The different categories the teams use to communicate on *Instagram* include communicating with famous drivers who were part of the sport or their team. The following table extracts the topics discussed by the team during the analysed period, which are about using celebrities related to sport or pop culture to communicate with the sport.

Using a series that uses storytelling is more appealing and compelling. For the audience, it is relatable to the content flow as it creates a deeper connection with the audience. (Fisher, 1984; 1-22).

The exploration of the messages that are conveyed by the different visual elements: In the conducted content analysis, the case as we were looking into the visual strategies through the use of the various formats: *videos, carrousels, pictures and the use of extra elements* such as *Emoji* or *music*. Those elements demonstrate that the *McLaren* and *Ferrari* teams use visual communication to reach, attract and keep the user's attention, being framed by the theory to the visual above is the visual communication theory of Kress & Van Leeuwen (2020), which is (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2020: chapter 2: 45-76).

Table 5 – Summary extract of McLaren and Ferrari communications about the number of posts per day and stories for days, weeks, and weeks ends of the analysed period.

	Ferrari		McLaren	
Day of publications	Ferrari: Publications in Feed	Ferrari: Stories	McLaren: Publications in Feed	McLaren: Stories
1 st of February 2024 Thursday	4	2	6	7
2 nd of February 2024 Friday	3	2	8	13
3 rd of February 2024 Saturday	2	/	4	4
4 th of February 2024 Sunday	2	/	5	4
8 th of February 2024 Thursday	5	1	3	5
9 th of February 2024 Friday	4	1	7	8
10 th of February 2024 Saturday	4	/	2	1
11 th of February 2024 Sunday	3	/	4	1
15 th of February 2024 Thursday	4	2	5	13
16 th of February 2024 Friday	4	2	6	2
17 th of February 2024 Saturday	4	/	2	1

18 th of February 2024 Sunday	3	2	3	3
22 nd of February 2024 Thursday	13	9	9	9
23 rd of February 2024 Friday	14	7	8	7
24 th of February 2024 Saturday	4	2	4	/
25 th of February 2024 Sunday	3	/	5	1
28 th of February 2024 Thursday	8	1	10	9
29 th of February 2024 Friday	9	6	10	20
1 st of March 2024 Saturday	13	1	11	20
2 nd of March 2024 Sunday	16	17	18	26

From that table, we can observe that *Ferrari* in the analysed period, the weeks days are considered heavier on communications than the weekends as the opponent analysed (*McLaren*), and tend to be softer on the weekends, especially on the period analysed because it was the winter season, just in the month of release of the revealing car, testing season, *Netflix* “*Drive to Survive*” new seasons release on the streaming platform and the first race and start of the 2024 *Formula One* season.

This is a favourable environment where weeks are more content-heavy than weekends, except the last weekend, which was heavier than *McLaren* because the season began with the first race of the year in *Bahrain*.

So, it is positive that stories and feed publications were superior during the weeks compared to the weekends analysed. Even regarding the story formats, some days, stories were not posted, but the *Ferrari* team needed to be more into the story formats.

In brief, the rhythm was higher on the first days of the week (Thursday and Friday) than on the weekends. They were posting more on their feed than stories about whether it was on weekends.

The number of publications is manageable. We prefer inbound marketing and relational marketing, which focuses on building and maintaining long-term relationships between the two actors. This aspect emphasises ongoing connections and fosters customer loyalty over time.

Through the content analysis conducted, *Ferrari's* strategies and technology uses have been posted regularly, with a range of two to sixteen publications per day. This consistency and presence are a way of connecting with the audience, engaging them, and keeping them informed.

As we can observe through [Appendix Annexe 1](#), which is the summary of *Ferrari* content analysis, the 13th of February was dedicated to the *Formula One* car reveals through different perspectives, and the team posted 14 publications on the feed between 9 a.m. and 8 p.m.

While speaking of strategies, optimal timing is essential to keep the audience engaged. Posts are scheduled throughout the day, usually from late morning until the end of the workday or sometimes later, around 7 pm to 9 pm. This strategy ensures that content is seen by the broader audience at different times and reaches different audiences. As the following example illustrates, Posts were published promoting the upcoming season on February 2nd, 2024, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

A connected theory is Kim & Hastak's (2018) network theory (2017), which examines how the users, content, and organisations here at *FI Teals* are connected and the complexity generated by this connection. (Kim, & Hastak, 2018: 86-96).

Table 4 shows that posts and stories demonstrate meaningful and practical engagement. This is connected to the Network team, where the users (nodes) and connections (edges) are the illustrations, and the representation of his fans interacts with the content through their different actions. According to Bakshy et al. (2012), high post-interaction can increase exposure and impact within the digital network (Bakshy et al., 2012, April: 519–528).

To keep the audiences interested, variation of content and topics is a central preoccupation. The diverse content themes and topics vary daily, from the pre-season activities related to drivers' promotions of different sponsorships or events, historical throwbacks, the new season coming and behind the scenes. This allows a broader fan to communicate and reach audiences through different interest points. February was dedicated to the internal promotion of the team,-

-so it was all about promoting their sponsors, revealing the new tracksuits to the fans, or the latest car teasing.

The 10th of February focused on promoting internal aspects, going from the sponsor publication through the reveal of the drivers' new tracksuits, the teasing of the car reveal through different publications or stories related to that with sponsor implications most of the time. It needs to be visible to the audience because most of us, when going on *social media* such as Instagram, need to pay attention and go deeper into the profound significance or implications. Still, team sponsors are a pillar of their function and perennial.

To keep the audience growing and reach new users, we can use relevant hashtags in the post to increase the visibility and discovery of the team's *Instagram* account. The hashtag helps the connection and can also start a conversation in the community.

Still, concerning engagement, the captions and legends often include *emojis* and elements such as music, driver identification, or just a question-marked legend to keep the user attracted and engaged; keeping the viewer's interest is an essential component.

On February 6th, the team teased the new *Formula One* car reveal. Throughout the day, they used *emojis* heavily to keep the audience interested and engaged, even if the number of posts was low.

For both teams, the most used format during the period was videos. Regarding *Ferrari*, videos were mainly used to tease, broadcast behind-the-scenes footage, highlight some events, and promote. As we can observe on the 16th of February 2024, in 4 daily publications in the feed, -3 were videos promoting the upcoming season and the drivers through different perspectives and montages. Carousel formats are publications with other pictures (a maximum of 10).

They provide the viewer with detailed and various perspectives in one publication. These formats were often used to showcase events through a series of moments.

On the 13th of February 2024, 7 carousel posts revealed different aspects of the *Formula One* car.

Even if the format pictures are less used, they are always high quality and focus on cars and drivers. As mentioned, they are a pillar for spreading key messages and maintaining a visual identity and attraction.

Teams communicate on *Instagram* through stories, which are more relevant when a team wants to communicate in real-time updates but also be more 'playful' with the audience with-

-tools such as polls and quizzes. This is quick and engaging, but it also completes the feed publications. For example, the stories on the 14th of February included behind-the-scenes glimpses and *Valentine's Day*-themed content, resulting in high engagement as they were connected to the team of the day's publications. The *Valentine's Day* celebration can also be connected to the Agenda Theory of McCombs and Shaw (1974).

As the formats used to matter, observing the substantial engagement days is less. Engagement peaks tend to happen on days with announcements, rivals, or events more composed of different content formats and interactive elements. On the 2nd of March 2024 (race day), 16 posts from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. included nine videos, two carousels, and five pictures, leading to high engagement.

The fan-centric content, as publications often focused on the drivers and their activities behind the scenes, resonated and generated interaction with fans because it resonated with the audience. On the 8th of February 2024, five posts centred on drivers and the behind-the-scenes team, utilising one video, three carousels, and one story.

The reveals and upcoming important events, such as the car rivals, *Grand Prix*, or events, were timed throughout different days to build excitement and anticipation and generate traffic and engagement and the period leading up to and during the Bahrain *Grand Prix* (28th of February 2024 to 2nd of March 2024) featured intensive posting, with 46 posts over three days.

Both analysed teams were throwing back on their history. Still, the team doing that the most was *Ferrari*, celebrating its rich history by creating nostalgia for past achievements connected to today's events and efforts.

Unlike their concurrence, they favoured the publication formats during this period, so they chose to post more on their feed (193 in the analysed period) compared to story formats (93). During this period, the format they favoured in their feed was the video (79 videos) and the *McLaren* team (81).

Ferrari's Instagram strategy involves a blend of consistent posting, varied content formats, strategic timing, and interactive engagement tactics. This comprehensive approach ensures a robust *social media* presence, fostering strong connections with fans and effectively promoting the team's activities and events.

All those data and reported facts are based on the content analysis in the document "*FERRARI SUMMARY CONTENT ANALYSIS—Appendix annexes 1.pdf*."

Table 4 shows that *McLaren's* rhythm was higher than on the weekends on the first days of the week (Thursday and Friday). During the analysed period, *McLaren* communicated by posting more in their feed during the weeks and being softer on posting on weekends. That pattern was observed each week of the analysed period, except last weekend, because it was the highest in publication as it was the season's first race. The patterns were observed not only for the publication formats but also for the story formats.

To continue on the number of posts per day, we can say that the strategy of the team can be compared to the outbound marketing, meaning that they are trying to search the fans and the audience by the amount of content and different topics they are speaking of, even if it is not a relation only from the company to the prospects, but in the two directions, even if the team is interacting in comment with users but not as much as they are posting. It generates a faster investment return, and the audience is “flooded” with content. (Dolisy, 2022, 14: 1).

Regarding the posting schedule in their feed, the team always posts in the morning but does not use a regular posting schedule. The later time of starting to post in a day was 1:30 p.m. on Monday, February 5th, 2024. It was a “soft” day concerning publication on their feed, with only two publications and one story.

As they are concurrent with *McLaren*, they use technologies and strategies, such as a consistent posting schedule, to maintain engagement. The team keeps a high posting scale, averaging 6- 10 daily posts. That amount ensures a continuous presence, engagement, and various content.

As examples, we can say that in the appendix *MCLAREN SUMMARY CONTENT ANALYSIS -Appendix annexes 2.pdf*’.

On March 2nd2024, the first race day of the year and season 2024, the team posted 18 publications and 26 stories in their feed from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. All the content covered different perspectives of the race day activities and the behind-the-scenes.

In order to reach a broader number of fans and traffic, the team are optimising strategies that are the optimal timing. As publications are going throughout the day, they usually start early, going from 6:40 am and going late until 11 pm; these strategies are put in place to ensure that different audience segments are reached, as it is clear that the audience reached at 8 am will not be the same typology as the one reached at 3 pm. Through the content analysis, it was observed on mostly all the days, as the 21st of February 2024, that as the first day of Testing in Bahrain,-

-the schedule of the posts was going from 8 pm until 10 pm, giving the audience a bigger picture of the different things that happened during the day and any updates.

As mentioned above, the topic and diverse content themes chosen and board by the team are also strategies of the *McLaren* team. The content can range from race days to cars, drivers, activities regarding promotion, lifestyle, fashion, and being behind the scenes.

On February 15th, 2024, the team focused on communicating about its apparel collaboration with the *Reiss* brand, using drivers, *Formula One* journalists, and United Kingdom (micro) influencers.

The publications were from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., comprising 5 publications in their feed and 13 stories throughout the day. This day's engagement was between the medium and engaged scale.

Another strategy observed was the use of hashtags and extra elements. The team used an *Emoji* in the caption/legend on each publication of their feed analysed.

As *Ferrari* used it regularly with hashtags, the *McLaren* team always used *Emojis* and fewer hashtags. They are using it a lot but favouring the *Emojis* more. This strategy can be to communicate with their audience that is one of the younger as *McLaren* reached 29,5% of the vote as the favourite team with *Red Bull* (19.8%) and *Ferrari* (17.9%). (Formula 1, 2023, October 20, New global fan survey reveals *F1*'s most popular team and driver.)

We are still talking about emojis, as they are an additional element of engagement enhancement. On February 14th 2024 (*Formula One* car reveal day), all 14 posts included engaging captions with emojis, leading to high fan interaction. This allows us to connect the content with a broader audience through the hast: people sensible to motorsports.

When speaking about fans and fans' contributions, we have User-Generated Content (UGC) that leverages fan contributions, emphasising the value of this UGC that fosters the community and engagement they are capturing feature fan pictures and art: The *Ferrari* team and *McLaren* leverage those to build reciprocal relationships with their audiences and fans. This is a path to enhance the fans' ability to contribute and participate while reinforcing the community feeling. (Simatzkin-Ohana, & Frosh, 2022: pp. 1235-1254.)

Regarding the formats used through those strategies, videos were used intensely to generate engagement and create a dynamic toward the team. This format was used for teasing, highlights-

-of race and behind-the-scenes, and lifestyle content. As observed on the 22nd of February, on 9 posts on this day, 4 of the posts were videos about the testing days and insights.

The Carousel formats were mainly focused on one theme but from different perspectives. On the 29th of February, 5 carousels were posted on 10 posts, giving different perspectives about the pre-race free practice testing day. Pictures are the least used format by the team but are still relevant to communicating more punctual and formal needs and maintaining the brand identity. About the stories, the *Ferrari* team is most used to updates and giving real-time updates, but they also create interactive content in a less formal format that is quicker to engage and complement the feed. On the 2nd of March 2024 (Race Day), 26 stories were posted, capturing immediate and engaging race-day content.

Engagement is a metric watched when speaking in the *social media* area, and the observations made are that the days considered high engagement were the ones with a higher number of posts but also thought the variations of formats connected.

For example, on February 14th, 2024 (*Formula One* car reveal day), 14 posts, including videos, carousels, and stories, led to high engagement.

Fan-centric content resonates with the audience, such as the lighting of the driver's activities (where fans can identify themselves), interactions with fans, and content behind the scenes. On February 19th, 2024, posts about Bahrain, pre-testing, and backstage activities included four videos, one carousel, and two pictures, fostering strong fan engagement.

The promotions of the different collaborations, team sponsorships, or even behind-the-scenes are timed strategically to build anticipation and excitement. As mentioned above, on February 15th, 2024, *McLaren* focused on the *Reiss* clothing collaboration, using five posts spread throughout the day.

Still, regarding the formats, *McLaren*, as opposed to the other analysed team during the analysed period, favoured the story formats (stories 239) instead of the feed publications (205).

This summary is based on the content analysis from the provided document "*MCLAREN SUMMARY CONTENT ANALYSIS -Appendix 2.pdf*."

Each team present on the circuit is passionate about motorsport and the excellence of racing. The content of their *Instagram* account exudes excitement for this sport and a strong passion for it, demonstrating the group's steadfast dedication to increasing performance and innovation on the racetrack.

As they are passionate, they foster inspiration and motivate the fans while uplifting their audience.

One observation about the tone of voice through content analysis concerns the team's interactivity. They are trying to engage in dialogue with their fans and foster a sense of community, which can be seen through user-generated content. They sometimes try to answer fans' comments under their publication and produce content that can be seen as Q&A (questions and answers) or challenges.

Inbound marketing and relational marketing focus on building and maintaining long-term relationships between the two actors. This aspect emphasises ongoing connections and fosters customer loyalty over time (Wellcom, 2021, March 17).

This is opposed to inbound marketing, which refers to strategies focused on attracting the audience to engage with them by proposing valuable experiences and content for them. For the team, *McLaren* and *Ferrari* are passing through some behind-the-scenes content (videos, pictures..., etc.) and interactive elements. These strategies attract fans through their platforms and let them join the team. This goes through high-quality content, interactive elements, and stories.

Opposed to that, outbound marketing can be seen as more “aggressive” as it is a strategy that actively reaches audiences through what is considered interruptive methods, but also those considered more traditional before the digital.

For the team, it goes from campaigns to promoting something commercial, such as a sponsored post or advertisement, to reach a broader audience. This passes through the content as sponsored posts, stories or ads, but also collaboration, as we have seen, for example, with the team *McLaren* and *Reiss* through the clothing capsule they created together and promoted during one of the few days analysed of the content analysis, to direct a broader audience and attracting new fans.

Table 5 – High day of traffic for Ferrari and McLaren and favoured format on those high days of engagement

Ferrari							
Date	Engagement	Amount of posts	Topics	Videos	Carrousel	Pictures	Stories
13/02	Really high	14	Reveal of F1 car from different perspectives	5	2	2	15
14/02	High	7	Valentine's day, insight F1, photoshoot headquarters	2	4	1	9
19/02	High	5	Diverse subjects	2	2	1	2
21/02	High	14	Incoming testing days	6	4	4	5
22/02	High	13	Testing day 1	5	2	6	9
23/02	High	14	Testing day 2	2	6	1	7
27/02	High	4	Incoming race week	1	2	1	1
01/03	High	13	Bahrain qualification day	4	5	4	1
02/03	High	16	Race day from different perspectives	9	2	5	17
Favorized formats				4/9	5/9	1/9	/

McLaren							
Date	Engagement	Amount of posts	Topics	Videos	Carrousel	Pictures	Stories
14/02	High	14	F1 Car reveal	8	3	3	16
21/02	Engaged-High	15	Testing Day One Bahrain	10	3	2	15
01/03	High	11	Qualifying Day	3	4	4	20
Favorized formats on the high days				2/3	1/3	1/3	/

Regarding the considered high days of traffic, *McLaren* tends to have reached them less than the *Ferrari* team, and that can be explained by the fact that *Ferrari* has a broader audience and knowledge among motorsports fans. Still, as a *lambda* person, more people are acknowledging the team.

The *McLaren* team used mainly pictures during those high-engagement days, unlike the *Ferrari* team, which used the carousel formats, allowing them to publish a series of images or sometimes pictures with one or two videos. The Italian strategies worked better. They reached more high-engagement days.

One of the many days the team ‘humanised’ their drivers is February 8, 2024. The Italian team focused on drivers and the behind-the-scenes of the teams and activities. They posted videos, carousels, and stories. This approach humanised the teams and the drivers to make the fans feel closer.

The historical and nostalgic content used by the teams is also allowed to their rich history and timeliness status. They regularly use their history by posting throwbacks and historical content-

-about past days and victories. This narrative (storytelling) gives the fans information about history and shows they are strong as they get through the times. They had, for example, used those multiple times during this research content analysis; one was the 3rd of February, The 11th and the 18th of February 2024.

The strategy of emphasising team history is based on the brand heritage, and both teams, whether it is *McLaren* or *Ferrari*, are utilising their history and connection to resonate with the long-term fans and their new fans about their legacy.

Brand Heritage is the facts that refer to the values derived from a brand tradition but also its history. This strategy and theory emphasises the team's history but also fosters respect, deeper emotional connection and respect that all contribute to solid community links and loyalty. (Urde, Greyser, & Balmer, 2007: 4-19.)

The behind-the-scenes narrative strategy is content that allows the fans to feel closer but also an internal point of view as if they were with the team before the *Grand Prix*. They provide depth into the narrative by making the team more 'transparent and relatable'. As they did on the 12th of February, they shared about their headquarters in *Maranello* by showing it, putting the teal mechanics in front of the stage, but also the face who is not the more 'known' of the circuit, that is not the drivers. They included three videos and one photo post to show the fans what working in the *Formula One team Ferrari* looks like.

Unique event integration is another component of the narrative strategy, as *Ferrari* uses it to integrate cultural moments, such as the well-known *Valentine's Day* on February 14th. They have incorporated it into their narrative to keep the content connected to reality, relevant, and aligned with the cultural context.

The next component concerns the main events in *Formula One* sports. The *Grand Prix* focus is also a narrative strategy for a week-long race. The Italian team is focusing their narrative on the coming race, allowing great and broad coverage from different perspectives to keep the fans engaged and connected. This is also promoting the Sunday race. On February 28th, *Ferrari's* posts centred around the Bahrain *Grand Prix*, including four videos, two carousels, and two stories, maintaining constant engagement leading up to the race.

As though the formats used for the narrative tell their story effectively, the video formats allow great coverage to capture attention quickly while conveying multiple pieces of information.

The carousels enhance the storytelling by mixing various images and videos in a single post. The stories are more ephemeral and offer real-time updates for live engagement.

In this narrative and storytelling, the engagement techniques of *emojis* on hashtags are added for the first element, a playful touch, while the second is more about increasing the traffic and the reach.

The engagement techniques, or extra elements such as *Emojis*, give a playful and young touch through the publications in the feed and stories.

The way *McLaren* uses *Instagram* to combine multiple digital content formats with a compelling story is a masterclass in storytelling. *McLaren* ensures its storytelling is fresh, approachable, and engaging by emphasising pre-season teasers, driver and team stories, historical content, behind-the-scenes access, unique event integration, and thorough race coverage. Providing a varied and captivating content experience keeps their existing fans interested and draws in new ones.

Ferrari and *McLaren* have customised their *Instagram* interaction methods to cultivate community building and customer loyalty. *Ferrari's* concentration on excellent storytelling and images creates a solid emotional connection, while *McLaren's* regular updates and behind-the-scenes content encourage participation and openness. These tactics are essential for the supporters of both teams to remain devoted and grow in unity.

The use of extra elements enhances the traffic on the post and is an aspect to consider when generating traffic. During a previous experience as a French fashion brand community manager, the person responsible explained that using extra elements is an excellent way to increase traffic and interaction with fans (Duhard, 2021).

The McLaren content dissemination strategy

Regarding the *McLaren* topics, the other variable studied during the content analysis was the topics, and even if the studied sport is *Formula One* and the two studied teams are symbolic of the sport, even if they are primarily dedicated to the *Formula One* sport, the topics they speak about are varied.

The team adopts a more modern, diverse approach to *Instagram* content than the other analysed team, even if this is not a comparative study.

Another different perspective comes from talking about their other motorsports leagues, merchandise, collaborations, and partnerships. They also reference POP culture through their *social media* communication (as in the montage with the Taylor Swift album to announce one of their projects that you can see under), historical and actual events...

As illustrations of a younger and more dynamic audience, the team is blending its traditional motorsport content with elements that are considered more pop culture elements and brand partnerships.

As they make pop culture references and collaborate, the team often tries to adapt its content to mainstream culture or collaborate with brands like *Reiss*, allowing the team to access different markets such as lifestyle and fashion.

McLaren also emphasises the human side of racing by posting and giving the fans a vision of day-to-day life, from what is going on in the circuit to pit crew activities and personal stories of drivers. This type of content is often shared through *Instagram* stories, which provide real-time engagement and give the fans a more intimate connection with the teams.

The teams' use of interactive content, such as polls, Q&A sessions, and UGC, encourages fans to contribute to the team's digital life. The *McLaren* team reposts some fans' work to deepen their involvement and engagement.

The *McLaren* strategy is more based on fan interaction and current trends and uses a higher number of stories and publications on *Instagram* than *Ferrari*. By using the video format and the interactivity of the platforms, *McLaren* allowed for entertaining a constant dialogue with fans, fostering loyalty and engagement through a sense of openness and inclusivity.

The Ferrari content dissemination strategy

Ferrari also discussed different topics during the analysis period. Even though the sport is the same for all in *Formula One*, they chose to abort it from manners.

Ferrari has chosen to communicate from their timeless aspect, as you can see under:

- On the 3rd of February, they posted a carousel about the team's history of old engines and cars as the first publication of the day.

On February 5th, a historical publication about the Silverstone circuit was published; it was the second post under the carousel format about the past races in the *United Kingdom at Silverstone*.

- On the 11th of February, a carousel birthday celebration of an “ancient” driver of the *Ferrari* team, *John Surtees*, who won a world title with them in 1964. Shared the post with the account *@museiferrari*. And the first post of the day.

- On the 22nd of February, they posted a post as the first publication of the day to wish a happy birthday to the iconic *Nikki Lauda*, who is deceased, and they did the same for *Alain Prost* as the first publication on the 24th of February.

This is a perspective on how the team speaks on *Instagram*, primarily through their discussion topics. They use the different cultural contexts available and leverage the aspect of sports. That explains how those data are connected to *Katz, Blumber, and Guerevitch's* (1974) user and gratification theory, meaning that audiences are researching and aiming toward media to fill specific wants, desires, and needs. (Blumler, & Katz, 1974: 180-220).

The Italian team's strategy is to use mixed content publications, going from topics such as promotional content, historical back moments, lifestyle, and being on the scenes to capture broader fan interests and categories. (Ruggiero, 2000: 3–37) & (Katz, E., Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974).

Different formats, such as videos, pictures, carousels, and stories, also fit different audiences' preferences and meet their expectations. This ensures the *Ferrari* team that the content will be consumed, but it also enhances the chance of being shared and even commented on to generate interaction.

The Italian team's strategy revolves around heritage, legacy, and prestige. It focuses on its rich history and iconic drivers.

So their content is often showcasing:

- Historical events and achievements: They post about their past victories, legendary drivers such as *Nikki Lauda* and *John Surtees*, and cars. Moreover, toward that, they are building a narrative that ties the team's past to the present.
- Cultural moments are key dates and celebrations, such as driver birthdays, essential races, and even important events like the American football *Super Bowl*. Communicating toward the anniversary of essential races reminds the fans of Ferrari's longstanding presence in the sport, as it has been observed in the *Nikki Lauda* birthday post and the Silverstone circuit history, which blends nostalgia with current events.
- The team also shares content about technological excellence. They highlight the technological aspects of their *Formula One* car, showcasing the engine, innovations, -

-and testing updates. The team reinforces its image of performance, precision, and prestige by sharing this more technical content.

Using a mix of carousel publications, high-quality images, and videos, *Ferrari* connects with its longstanding fans and a newer audience by picturing itself as a prestigious and timely team.

The posts are carefully scheduled around key *Formula One* events, particularly in the race lead-up, aligning with Agenda Setting Theory to keep *Ferrari* in mind for fans. By humanising the drivers and presenting the team as a family, *Ferrari* also cultivates a sense of belonging, reinforcing fan loyalty.

Both analysed teams use *Instagram* to disseminate content strategically, but each does so by reflecting their unique brand identities. *Ferrari* emphasises history, legacy, and a prestigious image, while McLaren leans toward modernity, pop culture, and fan interaction. By leveraging different content formats—such as stories, videos, and carousels—both teams ensure that their audience remains engaged through nostalgia, technical excellence, or relatable, humanised narratives.

6.4 Use of storytelling and narratives

Regarding the content, the team covers engaging themes and narratives, starting with pre-season events (drive, reveal of the car promotion, historical context, or lifestyle activities). Through those narratives, a continuous storytelling line is established between the team and followers, allowing them to be invested and fostering a sense of belonging and a stronger connection.

First, the *social media* strategies used by both teams, *McLaren* and *Ferrari*, feature different topics, such as new race highlights, behind-the-scenes, and driver-related topics, and stimulate user-rated content. *Ferrari* focuses on its long and rich history, current events related to the team, team activities, insight, and emotional narratives. Both teams use the same ideas about topics but sometimes from different perspectives.

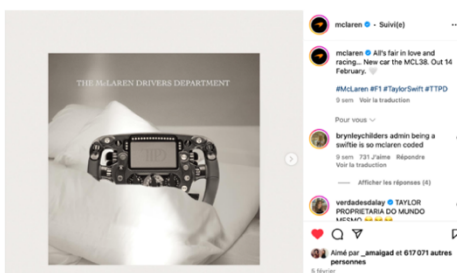
Also, content's visual appeal and aesthetic consistency are strategies that stimulate interactive interaction with fans, for example, through interactive content or posts.

The connection that can be made is that *social media* strategies connected to the *Formula One* activity through the live race coverage as the team on *Instagram* (analysed networks) but also doing that on other platforms such as *X*, where the team provides real-time updates during the weekend races, keeping a link toward the live event stream.

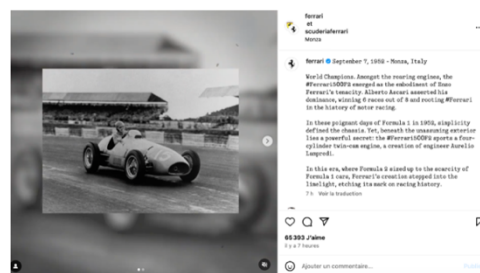
We also have pre-race and related content, such as previews, results of qualification sessions, or deep race analyses of the drivers or pros, that provide the fans with information and build excitement for each *Grand Prix*.

Nevertheless, one dimension often forgotten is the emotional connection, especially emotional branding, which aims to create a deeper emotional connection with consumers. Both teams employ “emotional narratives” to celebrate their historical and timeless victories or drivers’ histories. This content is essential for building a connection, especially an emotional one, as these links potentially create bonds that engage the team's notoriety and generate higher engagement. (Wu, & Li, 2018: 225-240.)

MCLAREN TOPICS: TOWARD CELEBRITY AND POP CULTURE



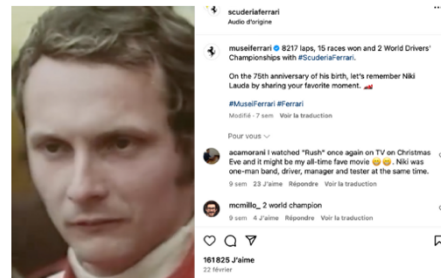
FERRARI TOPICS: TOWARD CELEBRITY AND POP CULTURE



MCLAREN TOPICS: TOWARD CELEBRITY AND POP CULTURE



FERRARI TOPICS: TOWARD CELEBRITY AND POP CULTURE



The narrative theory concerns storytelling to engage with audiences. In that content analysis, we can see that both teams use strategies to narrate events and tell a story by employing storytelling to engage, as we can observe in *Ferrari's* different historical posts or the various content creation narratives to build a deeper connection with fans.

Another way to describe *Formula One's* strategies for disseminating content on *social media* is through storytelling and narratives (a combination of digital and content they are constructing).

The *Ferrari Instagram* strategy seamlessly integrates various digital content formats, engaging topics, and dynamic narratives. It is divided into interconnected components that create a robust storyteller approach.

The first component concerns the *Preseason* teasing that generates the hype building.

The narrative strategy for the team in *Formula One* is that before the start of the season, they teased and spoke about it, intending to build anticipation. This included most upcoming races, events, and car reveals and focused on the drivers' preparation.

This anticipated and prepared engagement is helping to create excitement and anticipation among fans for the upcoming season.

As of the 6th of February 2024, we can observe that the Italian team was teasing about the reveal of their new *Formula One* car but also the new season ahead of us with the typology of the content of four videos and one story that was contributing to creating anticipation but also a dynamic prelude for the real day.

Regarding the strategies of storytelling and narrative combined with the digital content. Like *Ferrari*, *McLaren* uses a different combination of digital content formats and strategies to create compelling narratives and storytelling that are engaging on the *Instagram* platform.

Ferrari, the Italian team, is creating compelling pre-season excitement through the car reveal hut before the beginning of the season, as well as through their river preparations, collaborations, and teasing of upcoming events. They are using the anticipation factor to engage fans and keep them engaged.

On February 1st, *McLaren* posted six times, starting at noon and ending at 11 PM, focusing on teasing and promoting their activities. The posts included three videos and three carousels, each filled with engaging *emojis* and hashtags like *#McLaren* to maximise reach and interaction.

They also applied the team and diver narrative strategy; the team posts vigorously and strongly feature their drivers as being on track but off-track behind the scenes, still connected to teal content activities. They liked to highlight different perspectives toward the drivers, for example, by emphasising personal stories and the team's effort toward the drivers to have and produce engaging and relatable content.

As engaging with the audience the themes are estimated to be engaging, as well as the narrative of the *Instagram* of the *Formula One* teams, the Narrative Transportation Theory, implying that the individuals are becoming emotionally and mentally immersed in the narrative. That behaviour leads to stronger beliefs and attitudes regarding the content. The teams on *Instagram* use storytelling tools to create strong connections and a sense of belonging, as well as to immerse their followers fully. Both teams use the coverage to engage, buy using the team as, for example, car reveals, pre-season events and historical contexts are constantly used to foster the connection, Belonging and immersion of the *Formula One* audience. (Green, 2021: 87-101).

Both teams show that formats tend to focus on high-quality visuals and storytelling, posting consistently but also making good use of the interactive element to work on the emotional connection.

The *McLaren* team emphasises the high frequency of posts and updates through the different formats the *Instagram* platform allows. The team emphasises behind-the-scenes access more than the Italian team to foster a sense of transparency and involvement and construct a “loyal fan base.”

On February 7th, *McLaren* focused on their *Formula One* drivers and cars, posting four times from 11 AM to 7 PM. This day, they included two videos, one carousel, and two pictures designed to humanise the drivers and give fans a closer look at the team. The thing to remember about the *McLaren* team is that they also use drivers from other leagues to communicate on *Instagram* as the *E Extreme* league drivers. Still, the primary use of their drivers is the *Formula One Driver's League* as it is the main league promoted and one of the most important leagues, and it is the one that is making the most benefits but also the most known worldwide.

Ferrari communicates on *Instagram* using a lot of research history, whereas *McLaren* uses historical content but less than the Italian team.

Speaking of history and throwback, as opposed to *Ferrari*, *McLaren* communicates about previous wins and races by the team in the last 20s-30s decades.

On February 8th, *McLaren* posted thrice, focusing on throwbacks, their *Formula One* car, and a previous win of the later years.

The content included two videos, one carousel, and one picture, evoking nostalgia and educating new fans about the team’s legacy.

As *Instagram* is a showcase of the team, they are using it to promote their events and the events of the *Formula One* organisation in which they participate. The *McLaren* team is integrating special events and cultural movements into their communication. Their content is still relevant to the world toward them, and this is a way to diversify their content, too, not always focusing on the events of the circuit but also taking into account the cultural event and context.

As the Italian team, *McLaren* On February 14th, *McLaren*’s content centred around their *F1* car reveal, posting 14 times throughout the day. This included eight videos, three carousels, and three pictures, leveraging the excitement around the reveal to engage fans extensively.

Their *Grand Prix* coverage is a narrative strategy during the race week and weekends; the team focuses on comprehensive and intense *Grand Prix* coverage from different angles and insights to give the fans a complete narrative of the event and engage them. For the first race-

-and *Grand Prix* of the year on March 1st, during the *Bahrain Grand Prix* qualifying day, *McLaren* posted 11 updates. The posts included three videos, four carousels, and four pictures, offering fans a detailed and engaging event narrative.

Through those different narrative strategies and the integration of digital content formats, the team, such as *Ferrari*, uses a mix of digital content to have relevant storytelling and narratives. The videos are primarily designed to capture the audience's attention and produce dynamic content quickly. They are also using carousels from previous times to mix different formats to enhance their narrative and experience.

Pictures and stories are also used. The first helps maintain the brand's visual identity, while the second offers real-time updates.

Using events and leveraging critical events in their strategies, such as the *Formula One* car reveal or pre-race activities, they aim to generate community engagement and criminalise the excitement for the fans. They use those events to maintain an exciting and high level of community and interaction. An example is the event marketing theory, which advances critical events as a strategic means to create and generate interest among the community and the excitement generation of the fans. (Crowther, 2010: 369-383). & (Crowther, 2011: 68-82).

The team utilises the driver-centric narrative as a central element of the *Ferraris'* storytelling. They humanise the drivers deeper than just being athletes but genuine individuals like the fans. That helps the fans connect with them and demystify the fact that the drivers are inaccessible; they humanise them and make them more affordable to create as a form of personal connection with the fans.

As observed, storytelling and narrative have become crucial strategies for *Formula One* teams to engage with their audience on *social media*, particularly on Instagram, like the two analysed. Both teams employ distinct narrative techniques reflecting their brand identities while fostering deep connections with their fans and fanbases.

Ferrari's Use of Historical and Nostalgic Storytelling

Ferrari's approach is to leverage its rich history and iconic status in the sport to craft its narrative, mentioning nostalgia and honouring past victories. This narrative approach appeals to long-term fans who have followed the team through decades of racing and success.

Here, we can find critical elements of *Ferrari's* storytelling, including:

- Celebrating past victories and legendary drivers: The team frequently highlights the achievements of iconic drivers (Nikki Lauda), creating a sense of continuity between the team's past and present. The format of this post often takes the form of a carousel that showcases historical moments, old race cars, and iconic circuits (such as *Silverstone*).
- Maintenance of a legacy sense, as their posts emphasise the team's timeless status in *Formula One* by using historical content to refinance their image and endure their prestigious brand. By making a historical focus that resonates with longstanding fans and educates the newer followers about the *Ferrari* legacy.

McLaren Driver-centric and Humanising Narratives:

As the team storytelling is more focused on the present, it humanises the human side of this mechanical sport by highlighting its drivers and offering fans behind-the-scenes glimpses into the team's lives.

Critical aspects of the narrative of *McLaren's* strategy include:

- The humanisation of drivers as the team portrays drivers as approachable individuals rather than just athletes. Through personal stories, behind-the-scenes content, and collaborations with pop culture figures, *McLaren* builds a narrative that connects fans with drivers individually.
- Engagement with fan culture as the team taps into the fan enthusiasm by sharing driver moments outside the racing context. It can be a video of drivers preparing for a race, images of participation in promotional events, or personal insight.

The narrative structure

The narrative structure as the analysed period was happening as pre-season was pre-season teasing, meaning that both teams build anticipation with the carry out of the *Formula One* season coming with strategic pre-season content:

- *Ferrari* was engaging with its fans, teasing the car, revealing the driver's pre-season preparations and new technological advancements by often using videos and carousels to create a dynamic and exciting environment. As illustrations, the team frequently posted short clips about their last car in the days leading to the official reveal, and that had built hype and anticipation.
- *McLaren* used a similar stage, which can be framed as a more interactive approach to encourage fans to be active and participate in the pre-season through teasers, engaging hashtags, and emojis. It also shared personal moments of the drivers getting ready for the coming season and gave the fans insight into what was happening behind the curtain.

Grand Prix week narratives

The *Grand-Prix* week narratives, meaning that during the race weekends, the narrative is shifting as both teams use the *Instagram* platform to provide and have coherent and comprehensive coverage:

- *Ferrari* tends to focus on the drivers' performance and activities, using Instagram stories and carousels to give fans a detailed view of the race preparations, trackside live moments, and post-race qualifications analysis. Their coverage tends to be formal, aligning with their prestigious brand image.
- On the other hand, *McLaren* tends to be more 'dynamic' in their approach by using the Italian team mix of videos, photos and live updates to capture the energy and excitement toward the weekend race. The team also sheds light on behind-the-scenes content by showing and putting on stage the teamwork, preparing for each step of the weekend race and adding playful moments to engage an audience and potentially provide a relaxed environment for their fan base.

Ferrari employs the narrative of emotional engagement with its brand heritage and emotional narratives. The brand's storytelling is deeply rooted in heritage and responds to its legacy. On the other hand, *McLaren* offers a more intimate frame behind the scenes. They use a narrative rooted in humanisation, bleeding personal storytelling.

6.5 Understanding and exploring public engagement with the team.

Engagement is crucial to understanding how *Formula One* teams such as *Ferrari* and *McLaren* connect with their fans on *social media* such as *Instagram*. Each team employs unique strategies to build loyalty and foster engagement, resulting in varied levels of interactions. For this content analysis, the engagement levels were categorised into four tiers: low, medium, engaged, and high. These levels are defined based on interactive metrics such as likes, comments, and the overall response to publications in the feeds.

Table 6- *Summary of the rating scale audience (from the lowest to the top)*

<i>Scale for engagement</i>
Low
Medium
Engaged
High

Before going deeper, here is the engagement scale of the conducted content analysis, divided into four categories: low, medium, engaged, and high.

In order to have an explanation of what each category is signifying:

- Low: minimal interaction, less traffic, and less appealing than others; fans are less receptive.
- Medium: This indicates moderate interaction, where fans may like the content and leave a few comments.
- Engaged: strong interaction with significant comments, loves and discussion taking place in comments.
- High: extensive traffic, interaction and significant traffic.

Before going deeper, here is the engagement scale of the conducted content analysis, divided into four categories: low, medium, engaged, and high.

Some data to remember about this research is that for the *Ferrari* team, the most current engagement was Engaged 16 times and Medium 10 times, as *McLaren* was Engaged 15 times and Medium 16 times.

Table 7- *Engagement Levels summary, engagement categories and frequencies for Ferrari and McLaren*

Engagement levels summary	Low	Medium	Engaged	Medium/ Engaged	High	Engaged/ High	Really High	Total
Ferrari	1	5	13	2	8	1	1	31 Days
McLaren	3	11	10	4	2	1	3	31 Days

Regarding those different levels of engagement summaries, let us speak for the first time that the observation that can be made is that the most common engagement for the analysed teams during the observed period is engaged (13 times for *Ferrari* and 10 times for *McLaren*), followed by Medium engagement for the *McLaren* team (11 times) and High engagement for the *Ferrari* team (8 times).

This difference in engagement between the two teams can be explained by their differences in the number of followers: the *Ferrari* team has more followers than the *McLaren* one, which can play a role in the engagement factor. (The number of each team’s followers can be found on *Instagram*.)

However, for both teams, the most common engagement was engaged engagement, which is one objective of staying connected and relevant to the audience.

The following table shows that we can observe each team's testing day publications and stories. This period is interesting because it is essential for every team on the circuit and the *Formula One* organisation, as it is the first time of the year that each competing team is back on track with their new cars and can ‘measure’ the others.

Table 10- Summary of the testing days of both teams in Bahrain before the first Grand Prix.

Testing days of Ferrari	Video	Carrousel	Pictures	Stories	Engagement
21/02/24	5	2	6	9	High
22/02/24	7	6	1	7	Engaged/ High
23/02/24	1	/	3	2	High
Total					
	13	8	10	18	High (3)
Total of publications					31

Testing days of McLaren	Video	Carrousel	Pictures	Stories	Engagement
21/02/24	10	3	2	15	Engaged/High
22/02/24	4	3	2	9	Engaged
23/02/24	4	1	3	7	Medium/Engaged
Total					
	18	7	7	31	Engaged/ High
Total of publications					32

By analysing insight, we can see how *Ferrari* builds and maintains its audience engagement, dialogue with its fan base, and effective promotion of the team.

Ferrari employs different narrative techniques to engage their audience. The pre-season teaser is one of them and was used during the content analysis conducted multiple times. For example, on February 6th, 2024, the *Ferrari* team teased the upcoming reveal of the new *Formula One* car. The teams use anticipation techniques to engage with the public.

Ferrari's content posting strategy involved a variety of topics. One topic was created right at the beginning of the month to generate and maintain engagement with their audience.

The majority of posts were between the scale of *engaged* and *High* categories. The average engagement was calculated at 3,08 means, meaning it is a high level of interaction reporting to the scale and numerical values.

McLaren was posting more strongly, as their average engagement is 2,95, which indicates that *McLaren* is toward a medium that enables interaction with their audiences.

Both teams' content strategies for their public audience involved various content types, using different forms and topics to engage their audience.

The Italian team was observed to be the most consistent in generating higher engagement levels, as evidenced by their higher average engagement score (3,08). However, *McLaren* had more varied engagement levels, with many posts racing the level of *Medium* to *Engaged* interactions.

Ferrari posted 193 publications on its feeds during the analysed period, compared to the *McLaren* team's 205 posts per day. Although both teams have effective audience engagement tactics, *Ferrari's* strategy reached a marginally higher average engagement rate, according to the content analysis. This analysis offers insightful information on how various content kinds and engagement tactics influence public communication with these well-known *Formula One* teams.

Comprehending these factors facilitates optimising content initiatives to augment brand loyalty and fan engagement.

One factor that may factor into the peaking of community and the feeling of fostering it is the consistency and regularity of a brand, account, or team.

For example, for *Ferrari*, the consistent schedule of posts gives the audience a line to follow and a steady stream of content to engage with.

McLaren posts more frequently to capture the audience's attention and create a constant stream. Frequent posting can be seen as a way to engage constantly, reinforce community loyalty, and interact with the community.

Providing the audience with more meaningful content that is varied, as the team is doing, is a way to ensure that the audience is always informed but also entertained by the team, stimulating their commitment but mainly interest in the team.

Another factor is the high-visual-quality storytelling used by the team, which is mainly observed more robustly through the *Ferrari* team (in concordance) with their values. These Strategies are implemented to enhance the viewer experience and create a connection with followers so that they can interact with the publication and more easily connect with those types of content. High-visual content is more appealing to followers.

Both teams use interactive elements on the *Instagram* platform, another way to foster team loyalty and community. On the social network *Instagram*, they can use different interactive elements (especially in the stories formats) that allow them to sort Questions and Answers sessions (through a sticker element added to their stories), polls but also more “traditional” content as behind the scenes that can stimulate the follower's participation. This calls for a direct interaction of the fans as they feel valued and involved, triggering the feeling of community bond and loyalty.

As the fans are a pillar of it, putting fans on the front stage is another way to enhance and foster the fan community building. *Ferrari* fans are often featured through fan art and pictures in the team's publication feed.

This acknowledges and features both teams analysed, which is an essential step in building a reciprocal relationship with the audience.

The fans feel taken into account, appreciated, and counted for something. This is a strength for fostering community and building loyalty, as the fans are encouraged to participate and possibly be featured. The leverage of critical events, such as the car reveals, is linked as matron to building the extraction and anticipation; those events are a key to focusing on community interaction as they foster it but also excitement between fans, enhancing the spirit of community and a sense of unity. Finally, each team's history is a way to foster the community's loyalty. Both teams have strong histories. The factor of history is resonating with long-time fans and being timeless. This taps into an emotional aspect of the fandom. It also educates newer fans about the team's legacy, fostering a sense of respect and admiration that contributes to community building.

One connection can be made between the number and amount of publications posted by both teams on the platform, suggesting that the richness of communication media affects effectiveness. *Ferrari* uses high-quality visuals and storytelling, which can be interpreted and analysed using suitable media to convey more complex messages and emotions effectively. This approach ensures that the content is coherent and aligns with the audience.

McLaren, the Italian team, is using diverse formats (such as posts, stories, and behind-the-scenes...) is used by the *McLaren* team to leverage the richness of the *Instagram* platform to provide comprehensive but varied communication. (Trevino, Lengel, & Daft, 1987: 553-574). We can observe that using extra elements is a practical insight and a professional tools experience. By including those additional elements, this content is called interactive and multimedia, enhancing engagement and traffic. Furthermore, as mentioned, this insight is supported by a personal, professional experience in the fashion brand *social media* fields, in which strategies to increase interaction and traffic included adding extra elements such as tagging the place of the pots, adding music, and other additional elements. (Duhard, 2021)

Table 11- Summary of the amount of each format for McLaren and Ferrari.

Team	Number of Posts	Number of Videos	Number of Carrousel	Number of Pictures	Number of Story
McLaren	205	81	72	66	239
Ferrari	193	79	68	46	93

Ferrari fosters more interaction and engagement, especially with posts inviting fan participation. It consistently posts emotionally resonant content and really high-quality visuals. The team maintains a regular posting schedule, as *Ferrari's* engagement strategy is centred on consistency and quality. Sometimes, they increase content output during race weeks, as was observed on the weekend race of the 1st and 2nd of March 2024, the only observed race weeks. The use of high-quality visuals that speak about the car, behind-the-scenes shots, and even historical moments is their essence to capture fan interest. The illustrating example is that on race days, *Ferrari* shares fan-focused content, including old photographs of legendary drivers, along with racing-related updates. This dual focus appeals to new fans enthused by the current race and longtime fans lured in by nostalgia.

In contrast, the *McLaren* team is engaging through a more varied angle, from posts that are tied to lifestyle and cultural contexts involving each time emojis and interactive content each, driving fans to participate tend to reach higher engagement. is reposing on a more interactive approach, utilising the features of the *Instagram* platform to create ongoing conversations with their audience. Their use of *Instagram* stories gives a dynamic platform for real-time engagement, and their constant use of emojis in captions and interactive elements such as videos and stories gives the audience a personalising fan experience and fosters community loyalty.

As we can observe during the pre-season race weeks, the team often posted scenes of their preparation in their feed, complemented with stories that allowed the fans to share opinions-

-and possible outcomes. This made the fans feel like a part of the team and increased the immediacy of the experience.

Both teams build long-term loyalty through their content and use long-term narrative strategies to keep the audience engaged.

Ferrari creates a more substantial engagement experience for its followers by incorporating long-form stories or carousels into its content. The team relies on its history and prestige to build a consistent narrative emphasising its legacy and prestige. Posting about crucial moments in their history creates senses of continuity that resonate with long-term fans. Furthermore, the fans may feel part of a larger tradition, deepening their loyalty to the brand and the team.

McLaren is taking a different approach by focusing on lifestyle and collaborations to appeal to a broader audience and reach younger people. Integrating pop culture references and brand partnerships is crafting a modern, relatable narrative. Even using those narratives, they feature their drivers off track, engaging in activities other than racing and hutong the team, and appealing to a diverse audience.

Ferrari and *McLaren* effectively leverage and use *Instagram* to engage with their audiences, but they use distinctive strategies. The Italian team emphasises the use of its legacy and high-quality visual appeals, while *McLaren* is more interactive and pop culture-driven to reach a more diverse audience. Both teams foster loyalty and ensure sustained fan engagement through their respective strategies.

6.6 Formula One's Strategies Connection

Through this research and content analysis, the strategies of *Formula One* and the teams are interconnected with broader content that is relative to the spirit, such as the *Grand Prix*, marketing events or initiatives, and, for example, the docuseries *Drive to Survive* from the *Netflix* platform produced by the society *Liberty Media*.

So, to understand how *Formula One* strategies are connected to *Formula One social media* and other activities, we can use *McLaren* and *Ferrari's* content analysis.

Formula One strategies are connected to *FI's* other activities through related content and formats, such as the *Drive to Survive* docuseries on the *Netflix* platform (*Drive to Survive*=*DTS*).

The connection that can be made is a content synergy. However, the narrative is built as episodes featuring all of the team completing the circuit, and episodes tend to be promoted one at a time on *Instagram*. However, that remains rare; it is not regular content for the two team analysts. That creates a more profound engagement, and fans engage more with the team's stories. This content synergy is also about behind the scenes, as it gives "edit" content to the audiences, complements the scenes from the series, and, as mentioned, provides the fan with exclusive insight and additional content.

Emotional engagement is a leverage for the *Drive to Survive* docuseries as it uses emotional elements. The team can share those through posts showing that moment or behind the scenes, remembering the historical context and legacy of the team, which provides a broader vision of narrative connected to the series.

Another aspect of *social media* strategies connected to *Formula One* is the races called *Grand Prix*, the event promotion and engagement. In the days preceding the races, the team is building the excitement of the race by posting content about practice sessions, the preparation of drivers and teams, and some insight about drivers and what they are doing next to track and on track. That also allows the time updates and the combination of races currently happening to historical events or connected about the previous win in strategies.

The next aspect of strategies is about the 'other marketing initiatives', meaning merchandising and promotions, for example, the launches of products and collaborations that the team promoting merchandising, collaborations directly on the *Instagram* platform as we have seen with the *McLaren* team with their collaborations for the *Reiss* clothes line) that also allows the team to create exclusive content as a range of collaborations, previews and enhancing their brand. *Ferrari* has also worked on brand collaborations with luxury brands that are aligned with their values to showcase brand merchandise.

The team's community-building strategy involves fan events, as fans can riot and create content about them on *Instagram*. Charity and Corporate Social responsibility (CSR) are putting the brand in those campaigns to show fans their events and running campaigns.

The *Instagram* strategies used by *McLaren* and *Ferrari* are intricately linked to more general *Formula One* activity and content. Both teams give their supporters a consistent and exciting experience by utilising the appealing qualities of '*Drive to Survive*,' interacting with fans at *Grand Prix* events, and incorporating different marketing campaigns. This multipronged strategy guarantees ongoing fan interaction, cultivating a strong sense of community and-

-loyalty. This study demonstrates how these tactics improve the fan experience by supporting the teams and creating a more extraordinary *Formula One* environment.

Through that, we can observe *Cross Media Synergy*, highlighted by the team's strategies, and how the content across different platforms, such as *Instagram* or *Netflix*, converges to create a coherent narrative. Furthermore, this is about and aligned with *Jenkins's* (2006) concept of transmedia storytelling, about the different media platforms contributing to unifying the story to enhance fan engagement and experience across the various platforms that can be seen as different 'touchpoints. It creates a unified finality and all experience for *Formula One* fans. (Jenkins, 2009: 56.)

The observed content synergy also emphasises the effects of long-term engagement relationship building and customer relationship building (Egan, 2008: 287-291). Relational marketing is supported by the fact that the *Ferrari* and *McLaren* teams are interactive and consistent through their *social media* strategies, which alienates this approach. Relational marketing is evident in both teams' strategy of frequent posting, engaging content, and community involvement. This approach cultivates enduring connections with supporters, augmenting allegiance and persistent participation.

Formula One is part of a bigger and broader content strategy, including different formats such as the '*Drive to Survive*' docuseries. This strategy is aligned with the various theories above but also connected with the Social Identity theory of Tajfel & Turner (1979), the agenda-setting or user gratification theory, by giving and creating various platforms for the audience where they can engage, be emotionally connected, and focus on the fan experience and community. (Tajfel & Turner, 1979: 37-47).

The content synergy and integration of live events, ad race highlights, promotion, or behind-the-scenes content, with the help of documentary formats, gives the fans an overview that pushes them to engage but is also more comprehensive.

Furthermore, this synergy across different platforms and firms gives the fans a more robust and relevant brand narrative and community, which helps them remain engaged.

Table 12- *Social Media Strategies of Ferrari and McLaren: Integration with Formula One Activities and Cross-Platform Synergy*

Categories	Ferrari	McLaren
Social media integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote races and partnerships with high quality visuals. Post behind-the-scenes content, driver preparations, and car reveals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixes race updates with lifestyle-focused content to appeal to a broader audience. Integrates pop culture collaborations (e.g., Reiss fashion partnerships).
Synergy with live events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses Instagram stories and posts to build anticipation for races. Provides live updates during races 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-race content includes team strategies, driver preparations. Live race updates with real-time videos and commentary.
Drive to Survive integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shares behind-the-scenes clips and references to moments from the series. Highlights reflections on races featured in Drive to Survive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses behind-the-scenes content that aligns with the series. Highlights driver dynamics and personal stories shown in Drive to Survive.
Race Day coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-race content includes driver portraits and team preparations. Instagram stories provide live updates on key race moments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timely posts with real-time videos and updates. Combines quick highlights with race-day commentary and behind-the-scenes moments.
Cross Platform Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses X for real-time race updates, Instagram for visual storytelling, and YouTube for longer videos and interviews. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extensive use of YouTube for long-form content (interviews, race highlights). Synchronizes X (Twitter) and Instagram for live commentary and updates.

By integrating their *social media* strategies with their broader *Formula One* activities, such as races and partnerships, the teams can effectively maintain a coherent and consistent dynamic presence across their digital platforms.

The synergy between live events, *social media* production, and *social media* content (such as *Drive to Survive*) allows a seamless fan experience. As they expand on other platforms, those teams ensure that their content is easy to access and engage with different platform users, allowing different perspectives to foster strong connections and long-term loyalty.

6.7 Strategies alignment with public relations theories

As observed after the content analysis of the team and its *social media*, *social media* is concordant with and aligned with different Public Relations theories. It leverages different concepts, from engagement to audience segmentation and narrative.

The following section will frame and establish its connection with publications relations theories.

The first connection of the different strategies used by the team connected with Public Relations theory concerns the *McLaren* team, as one of their strategies is to build and keep moving the relationship with different actors such as sponsorship, community, fans and the media, and this aligned with the management theory. This theory is all about maintaining mutual and impact relationships with the actor to achieve the objectives defined by the organisation. *McLaren* tends to engage with their fans through *social media* by collaborating and being transparent regarding sponsors.

Frequency and timing are two of McLaren's theories, which can be framed with the media engagement theory. They consistently post during the day and align with the theory rather than providing content to the audience to keep them engaged. This strategy ensures that the followers and receptors engage with the provided content, increasing its visibility and interaction. (Hollebeek, & Macky, 2019: 27-41.).

Moreover, throughout the media engagement, *McLaren's* use of media and different formats, such as videos, carousel, and pictures, provides the fans with their perceptions, whatever that is. That proposition of different formats allows the *McLaren* team to enhance engagement and message retention. (Luo, & Remus, 2014: 281-295).

Another public relations theory is the framing theory, which can be seen through content customisation in this case study. As the team communicates about different topics related to *Formula One* sports, they can post about the reveal of their new cars or about a race that aligns with the framing theory, meaning that they are highlighting some elements to shape the audience's perception (Entman, 1993: 51-58). This public relations strategy helps the *McLaren* team emphasise the brand and its values by considering narratives.

Still, concerning the Framing Theory, narrative consistency toward the use of extra elements such as *Emojis* or hashtags creates and reinforces a uniformity of the brand through the message, reinforcing the brand's identity and making it more recognisable (Goffman, 1974).

Concerning the Uses and Gratifications Theory, we use interactive elements like *emojis* to create interactive posts. Sense of inclusion and engagement, and those posts give the audience the need for entertainment and social interaction, a crucial perspective on the uses and gratification theory. This strategy closes the audience's need for engagement and personalisation of experience. (Blumler, & Katz, 1974).

Formula One Time's tailored content, focusing on different topics, provides the team with content that will satisfy the most interests of their audiences. They can meet their interests, enhance user satisfaction, and impact loyalty (Ruggiero, 2000: 3–37).

Regarding the Two-way symmetrical public relations model connected to that, we have the audience's feedback through the engaged nature of the post and content posted. Team, this shows that they are active and receptive to their audience engagement and comments, emphasising the two-way symmetrical model of Public Relations. (Grunig, & Hunt, 1984).

This approach emphasises and fosters dialogue between the teams and the audience by promoting relationship-building and mutual understanding.

Furthermore, the *McLaren* team curates and adapts the content based on engagement levels, showing that the commitment to improving the strategies through audience insights is the heart and core principle of the two-way symmetrical model.

Through exclusive content and behind-the-scenes, the *McLaren* team is creating a sense of the value of their followers, showing them behind the scenes and making them feel like a part of the team. This means gaining the advantage of following their *social media* channels, the theory framing that is the Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 2017: 69-81).

Through this relationship between the team and their followers, the team cultivates the binds and strengthens the relations factors. As the engagement rates illustrate, the content seems valuable to the eyes of the audience, allowing the team to continue to provide quality content. That reciprocal engagement generates a reciprocal cycle of benefits.

Nevertheless, *McLaren's social media* strategy, including its *Instagram* account, is aligned with the principal public relations theories by, for the first time, shaping the narrative, meeting the audience's needs, generating and fostering engagement, being interactive and dive, and creating value exchanges. These strategies emphasise a dynamic presence in the digital media space. This impacts brand loyalty and the audience interaction sphere.

After discussing the *McLaren* team, we can now discuss the *Ferrari* team and their connection to Public relations.

Ferrari's strategies can align with public relations theories and are similar to those of the *McLaren* team.

The system there is the first one we are going to discuss. This strategy considers the environments of the organisation and *Formula One* teams, with feedback loops allowing them to adjust and influence their operations. (Hopwood, 2012: 13–32).

The *Ferrari* team's strategy regarding consistency is varied through the haste of their *social media* posts and the content used to illustrate this. They frequently post content and updates using different interactive elements, such as visual elements or emojis. They adapt to the audience and listen to feedback to generate content that is by their audience to maintain engagement levels (Stoldt et al., 2020: 27-113 & 135-163).

As *McLaren*, the Italian team focuses on mutual relationships between the public and the public, and this relationship is beneficial. This is the relationship management theory, *Ferrari's* strategy is to be with that through engaging content but also personalised to enhance the relationship and foster a solid link. (Kent, & Taylor, 2002: 21–37.).

The way they communicate, through updates in stories, behind-the-scenes content, and even the use of Emojis, shows the team's desire to have a two-way communication channel that enhances fan engagement but also the need for feedback (Ledingham & Bruning, 2000: 130-144). James Grunings's two-way symmetrical model of PR is based on a mutual understanding and exchange between an organisation, the teal, and its public.

The next theory aligned with *Ferrari's* Public Relations theories is the Agenda Setting Theory, implying that the media possibly influences the public agenda by outing under lights specific topics that can be observed through *Ferrari's* content that is often not saying consistently they are crucial events such as the races, grand pr or for example the new *Formula One* race car. (McCombs, & Valenzuela, 2007: 44-50). By doing that, the team shapes their audiences' interests and drives their focus to stay attractive and engaged in the calendar and content. (McCombs, Shaw, & Weaver, 2018: 131–152).

The Uses and Gratification theory frames this strategy, another Ferrari-aligned Public Relations Theory strategy. It is based on the audience researching media content to satisfy a need or want.

Concerning the social exchange Theory, the *Ferrari* team constantly engages with and provides content to the fans, creating ongoing exchanges that impact and build loyalty and keep stretching the audience invested in the team. If fans constantly receive and engage, it is a “reward” that provides them with constant updates for their continued attention and engagement. The Social Exchange Theory is based on the principle that social behaviour results from an exchange process to maximise benefits and reduce costs. (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005: 874-900), (Cook et al., 2013: 61-68).

Furthermore, the Italian team uses *social media*, such as *Instagram*, to tease different events in which they are invested and promote these various aspects, including technological progress. By using different *social media* platforms, the team ensures the team's innovation and effective sports communication to a vast audience that is depressing and wants enthusiasm. Framed by the theory is the diffusion of innovation theory, which means understanding why, how, and at which rate technology or new concepts spread. (Kaminski, 2011: 1–6). & (Rogers, Singhal, & Quinlan, 2014: 432-448).

Table 13- *Ferrari and McLaren Social Media Strategies through Public Relation engagement and practices theories*

Categories	Ferrari	McLaren
Public Relations and Media Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses the Agenda-Setting Theory to guide audience by focusing on legacy, achievements, and history. • Consistent posting emphasizes the team’s prestige, managing audience perception of Ferrari as a timeless brand. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverages Social Exchange Theory through two-way communication and engagement: dialogue with their audience. • Interactive elements to encourage audience participation and feedback.
PR and Narrative Framing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frames content around historical achievements, drivers, and technical work, shaping perceptions of Ferrari as a heritage brand. • Uses narrative framing to highlight the team’s storied legacy and humanizing them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasizes driver stories and modernity, humanizing the team and drivers. • Narrative framing focuses on personal and accessible angles and making the team more relatable to fans.
Interactive Content & Uses and Gratification Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engages fans with historical commemorative posts, and emotional content, satisfying their need for connection and interaction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular use of polls, UGC, and comments aligns with Uses and Gratification Theory, giving fans personalized experiences and a sense of participation.
Emotional and Relational Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds emotional branding through posts celebrating the team’s legacy and historical achievements. • High-quality visuals reinforce prestige and exclusivity, deepening emotional engagement with long-term fans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on personal storytelling to humanize drivers and build emotional connections to stimulate user and consumer. • Visual content is dynamic and more casual but still professional, making the team approachable and relatable, fostering long-term loyalty.

Ferrari and McLaren’s social media strategies are connected to crucial public relations theories. By consistently posting and using their legacy, Ferrari manages the audience’s perceptions of their brand and team. In contrast, McLaren uses two-way communication and

interactive content to create a deeper engagement and community. Each team strategy leverages relational, marketing, and emotional marketing to enhance fan connection and loyalty (long-term) with appealing visual content and complete storytelling.

6.8 Summary of Findings

Through the analysis of *Ferrari's* and *McLaren's* communication strategies, several similarities and differences were identified in how teams interact with their audience through different aspects, such as marketing, public relations, and branding.

We will first discuss the teams' similarities regarding their first aspect, public relations, followed by their similarities in branding and marketing. The differences will be discussed in the second part.

- Public relations: We can frame *McLaren* and *Ferrari* in the frame of public relations. Speaking of theory, the agenda-setting theory can be framed as their focus is to drive their audiences' attention to specific chosen topics, such as the real of the car and upcoming races. So, by prioritising content, they find specific *Formula One* events and shape their conversation with fans.

Both teams engage in two-way communication, aligning with social exchange theory. They create and maintain a dialogue with their audience and fans by stimulating engagement through comments and interaction, which benefits both parties, as the fan feels considerate and valued.

- Branding: Each team analysed is based and relies heavily on the emotional branding aspect to be able to foster deep connections with their audience. *Ferrari* is emphasising their timeless legacy and prestige. On the other hand, *McLaren* is humanising its brands and drivers and demonstrating a dynamic mood and image. As *Instagram* is a visual platform, the team teams are consistently using visual storytelling in their publications, whether it be with high-content quality visual r videos; the aim is that they are reinforcing their team and brand identity connected to their values as *Ferrari's* emphasis is prestige and heritage and *McLaren* in more approachable, casual but still high-quality content.

- Marketing: Digital marketing strategies are used by the teams to build brand awareness-

-furthermore, regarding fan engagement, *Ferrari* and *McLaren* use different formats, such as videos, carousels, pictures, and stories, to reach and appeal to different categories of fans by proposing different content based on their preferences. This multi-format technique ensures broadening the reach and remaining engagement on their content. Their *social media* are indispensable tools to promote different aspects, from collaborations, merchandise, and partnerships among the teams, and these posts are not only informative.

The differences in the communication strategies, even if they have common approaches, *Ferrari* and *McLaren* are using distinctive communication strategies that are aligned with their brand identities:

- *Ferrari* aspect on public relations and branding: The team emphasises its strategy and legacy in its public relations strategies. They are framing and using the team as history and iconic drivers. Their posts often use time references and technical knowledge that align with the framing theory. Moreover, this is an approach to reinforcing the team's heritage brand status and calling the fans' value related to excellence and traditions. Their publications are observed to be formal and polished and reflect their brand image and value. Regarding marketing, the team is based on promoting a specific image of luxury and exclusivity but made accessible to a more significant number with accessible content, even if it seems exclusive, a high-risk mission. They collaborate with premium brands and luxury partnerships, reinforcing the team's status. Their content is tailored in function to reach fans who are fond of technical prowess and timeless legacy.
- *McLaren* is related to public relations and branding; its communications strategies emphasise dynamism, approachable modernity, and accessibility. The team's narrative focuses more on their drivers, personal stories, and behind-the-scenes content. It is adding more lifestyle elements that make the team more approachable and relatable. *McLaren's* alignment with the framing theory is reposing on present events and trends, reaching and calling a younger and more dynamic audience, a category of individuals with fewer resources (financially speaking). As the tone is more casual and playful in their communication, the fans are surrounded by the team's daily life and its creation of an engaging environment where the audience feels like a part of the journey.

Regarding marketing, their strategy leans on different aspects, such as pop culture, collaborations and the world of *Formula One*. As they are doing collaborations with known brands such as *Reiss*, *Abercrombie & Fitch*, and *Hollister* and calling influencers and personalities, the strategy is designed to reach a broadened audience that is going beyond the *Formula One* sphere and reaching a new fan base that may be more attracted to lifestyle driver fans. Using interactive elements also invites the fans to interact and participate directly and fosters strong brand loyalty. The team's tone may seem more inclusive and coordinated regarding sharing and community, unlike the *Ferrari* team, which can seem more exclusive.

Ferrari and *McLaren* have common strategies and approaches to engaging their audience through agenda-setting and emotional branding. Each team relies on multiform content and visual storytelling to engage and interact. Furthermore, the Italian team, *Ferrari*, relies on legacy and uses formality and exclusivity, while the *McLaren* team uses driver-centric narratives, modernity, and substantial fan participation.

Chapter 7- Conclusion

Analysing *social media* strategies used by the *Formula One* team on *Instagram* highlights and reveals digital platforms' fundamental importance and significance.

The teams studied, *McLaren* and *Ferrari*, in this research, highlight the understanding that the *Instagram* platform can be a tool that fosters community, creates and sustains meaningful connections, creates coherent content that aligns with brand values, and is strategic at the same time.

The quality content analysis of *Ferrari* and *McLaren's* publications and stories, conducted over a month, sheds light on distinctive approvals in their content delivery.

Ferrari relies heavily on his legacy and prestige by emphasising his heritage, performance and a specific exclusive image. While *McLaren* is more about prioritising the interactive, modern and fan-inclusive strategy, even if the Italian team is doing it sometimes, the *McLaren* team is exuding those aspects in their strategy and communication. The observation is that both team strategies are aligned with their brand identities and ensure coherence between their *social media* communication, general communications and brand image.

The study also highlights *Instagram's* effective use of publications and stories with more interactive elements, such as emojis and Questions and Answers (Q&A), which are crucial in maintaining fan engagement and reaching a new audience.

Fans are not passive individuals but are active participants, making them consumers and active in shaping the digital narrative.

The *Formula One* teams leverage that through their shared and user-generated content, extending their reach to a broader audience.

~~This research analyses how~~ *Formula One* teams, focusing on *Ferrari* and *McLaren*, use their *social media* and strategies, specifically *Instagram*, to disseminate content, foster engagement, and align with public relations strategies. Following the research objectives, the main results are the most common topics.

Firstly, the strategies applied by *Formula One* to disseminate content on *Instagram* show that everything they are posting is aligned with their brand identities. Eve uses varied content and forms to engage its audience. However, the content varies as *Ferrari* emphasises their-

-technical expertise and legacy on the other, and *McLaren* is a more lifestyle-focused moder and called a more casual and younger demographic. This highlights the team's capacity to shape the public agenda theory by promoting crucial events. (McCombs, Shaw, & Weaver,2018).

Secondly, storytelling and narratives are mandatory for both teams, even if their approaches differ. *Ferrari* sometimes uses historical storytelling to reinforce and build a solid emotional connection. In contrast, *McLaren's* driver-centric narrative makes the *Formula One* sphere more human. Those narratives enhance the sense of belonging and improve engagement by aligning with social identity theory.

Thirdly, the study explores public engagement and loyalty, identifying that each team has a consistent schedule that creates habit-forming engagement and that two-way communication stimulates fan involvement, as highlighted in social exchange theory.

Fourthly, the link between *social media* strategies and *Formula One's* broader activities was studied, and both teams are integrating their *social media* with live events. Moreover, *social media* is done in content synergy with external media, such as the *Netflix* docuseries *Drive to Survive*, enhancing and amplifying engagement by providing another glimpse that ties into the broader *Formula One* narrative. The alignment across platforms reflects a cross-platform synergy and transmedia storytelling.

Lastly, the alignment of public relations theories with *social media* is incontestable. I can frame the teams' practices using framing theory and the two-way communication model. Both teams utilise emotional branding and relational marketing to build long-term loyalty through compelling storytelling and strategic engagement.

Media Life is wholly engaged in the strategies as they post each day of the week. Connections with sport are allowed through the Network Society of Castells and the Platform Society of Van Djick. It is completely intertwined with the media life with the Network Society to mobilise the audience.

To foster audiences, the practices stimulate engagement by asking questions to engage with fans, whether through stories or publications.

To conclude, the use and success of the different strategies underline the importance of consistency, creativity, and authenticity in digital communications.

The *social media* landscape is constantly evolving, and the adaptability to being able to adapt and innovate regarding the content creation will stay a pillar and essential for the *Formula One* team attempting to expand their links with current fans and attract new followers.

The strategic use of *Instagram* and the analysis of both teams demonstrate that *social media* can be a powerful tool to maintain relevance and tease the competitive sports industry with fan engagement, brand loyalty, commercial success, and strategic communications.

Media Life is wholly engaged in the strategies as they post each day of the week. Connections with sport are allowed through the Network Society of Castells and the Platform Society of Van Djick. It is completely intertwined with the media life with the Network Society to mobilise the audience.

In sum, this research shows us that sports communications and *Formula One* are entirely engaged with Castells and Van Djick's Network Society and Media Life concept and that social media connects and mobilises audiences.

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Appendix :

Appendix I: Content Analysis of Ferrari:

Ferrari :Content analysis summary

Day	Number of posts	Publication time	Main topics	Use of hastags	Number of video	Carrousel	Picture	Number of story	Fan engagement	Special observation
01/02/2024	4	Starting at 12 pm ending at 9:40 pm	Pre season drive & driver	yes	2	/	2	2	High	emoji in almost each caption and use of extra element
02/02/2024	3	Starting at 10 am ending at 4 pm	Promoting the season coming (through fan drivers and cars)	yes	/	1	2	2	Engaged	emoji in almost each caption and use of extra element
03/02/2024	2	Starting at 12 pm ending at 4 pm	Ferrari history, throwback previous season	yes	/	2	/	/	Medium	emoji in almost each caption and use of extra element
04/02/2024	2	Starting at 11 am ending at 7 pm	Promotion through drivers (challenges)	yes	1	1	/	/	Engaged	emoji in almost each caption and use of extra element
05/02/2024	4	Starting at 11 am ending at 6 pm	Variation of subjects from driver to history	yes	/	4	/	/	Medium	emoji in almost each caption and use of extra element
06/02/2024	5	Starting at 12 pm ending at 6 pm	Teasing reveal of F1 car and the new incoming season	yes	4	/	1	/	Low	emoji in almost each caption and use of extra element
07/02/2024	4	Starting at 11 am ending at 7 pm	Teasing through mechanics, drivers and visuals	yes	1	3	/	3	Medium/ Engaged	emoji in almost each caption and use of extra element
08/02/2024	5	Starting at 10 am ending at 8 pm	Focusing on the drivers and behing stage team	yes	1	3	1	1	Medium	emoji in almost each caption and use of extra element
09/02/2024	4	Starting at 10:30 ending at 7 pm	Promoting the team through various perspectives	yes	1	/	3	1	Engaged	emoji in almost each caption and use of extra element
10/02/2024	4	Starting at 11:30 am ending at 5 pm	Promoting new traks suits, fans and new car reveal	yes	/	3	1	/	Engaged	emoji in almost each caption and use of extra element
11/02/2024	3	Starting at 11 am ending at 6 pm	Backstage / news / throwback	yes	1	1	1	/	Engaged	emoji in almost each caption and use of extra element
12/02/2024	4	Starting at 9:30 ending at 6 pm	Manarelo headquarters and backstage	yes	3	1	/	/	Engaged	emoji in almost each caption and use of extra element
13/02/2024	14	Starting at 9 am ending at 8 pm	Reveal of F1 cars from differents perspectives	yes	5	7	2	15	Really high	emoji in almost each caption and use of extra element
14/02/2024	7	Starting at 10 am ending at 8 pm	Valentine day post, insight of F1 and photoshoot in HQ	yes	2	4	1	9	High	emoji in almost each caption and use of extra element
15/02/2024	4	Starting at 10 am ending at 6 pm	Teasing and promoting the new car and sponsorship	yes	3	1	/	2	Medium/ Engaged	emoji in almost each caption and use of extra element
16/02/2024	4	Starting at 10 am ending at 5 pm	Promoting new seasons and drivers from different perspectives	yes	3	1	/	2	Engaged	emoji in almost each caption and use of extra element
17/02/2024	4	Starting at 9 am ending at 7 pm	Promoting car and team in general	yes	2	2	/	/	Engaged	emoji in almost each caption and use of extra element
18/02/2024	3	Starting at 10 am ending at 5 pm	Variation of subjects	yes	3	/	/	2	Medium	emoji in almost each caption and use of extra element
19/02/2024	5	Starting at 10:30 ending at 8 pm	Variation of subjects from car, testing and look	yes	2	2	1	2	High	emoji in almost each caption and use of extra element
20/02/2024	6	Starting at 10:30 ending at 7 pm	Different subjects: schedule, challenges, drivers and car	yes	3	2	1	2	Engaged	emoji in almost each caption and use of extra element
21/02/2024	14	Starting at 8:25 am ending at 10 pm	Promotion of the incoming testing day	yes	6	4	4	5	High	emoji in almost each caption and use of extra element
22/02/2024	13	Starting at 10 am ending at 9 pm	Promotion of testing day 1	yes	5	2	6	9	High	emoji in almost each caption and use of extra element
23/02/2024	14	Starting at 7 am ending at 9 pm	Promotion of testing day 2	yes	7	6	1	7	Engaged/ High	emoji in almost each caption and use of extra element
24/02/2024	4	Starting at 10 am ending at 6 pm	Promotion of testing day 3	yes	1	/	3	2	Medium	emoji in almost each caption and use of extra element
25/02/2024	3	Starting at 11 am ending at 5 pm	Throwback on testing days	yes	2	/	1	/	Engaged	emoji in almost each caption and use of extra element
26/02/2024	4	Starting at 11:30 am ending at 8 pm	Promotion of race week in Bahrain	yes	1	2	1	1	Engaged	emoji in almost each caption and use of extra element
27/02/2024	4	Starting at 9 am ending at 6 pm	Promotion of race week in Bahrain from differents perspectives	yes	1	2	1	1	High	emoji in almost each caption and use of extra element
28/02/2024	8	Starting at 9 am ending at 9 pm	Bahrain Grand Prix focus (on the before)	yes	4	2	2	1	Engaged	emoji in almost each caption and use of extra element
29/02/2024	9	Starting at 10:30 am ending at 10 pm	Bahrain free practises (before race)	yes	2	5	2	6	Engaged	emoji in almost each caption and use of extra element
01/03/2024	13	Starting at 9:30 am ending at 8 pm	Bahrain qualifying day	yes	4	5	4	1	High	emoji in almost each caption and use of extra element
02/03/2024	16	Starting at 9 am ending at 10 pm	Racing day from different perspectives	yes	9	2	5	17	High	emoji in almost each caption and use of extra element

Scale for engagement
Low
medium
engaged
high

Total	193
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79	68	46	93	Engaged (16) Medium (10)
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Appendix 2: Summary of content analysis of McLaren:

McLaren : Content analysis summary

Day	Number of posts	Publication time	Main topics	Use of hastags	Number of video	Carrousel	Picture	Number of story	Fan engagement	Special observation
01/02/2024	6	Starting at 12:00:00 ending at 11 pm	teasing and promoting	yes #mclaren	3	3	4	7	Engaged	emoji in each caption and use of extra element
02/02/2024	8	Starting at 8 am ending at 8 pm	League of extreme sport and test F1 in Barcelona	yes each post	2	3	6	13	Receptive and engaged	emoji in each caption and use of extra element
03/02/2024	4	Starting at 9 am ending at 6 pm	Barcelona druving test and materials focus	yes	/	4	4	4	Medium	emoji in each caption and use of extra element
04/02/2024	5	Starting at 9 am ending at 7 pm	really variated	yes	5	1	1	4	Medium	emoji in each caption and use of extra element
05/02/2024	2	Starting at 1:30 pm ending at 4 pm	from tires and montage from Taylor Swift	yes	1	/	1	1	Engaged	emoji in each caption and use of extra element
06/02/2024	4	Starting at 11 am ending at 7 pm	Focus on the F1 car	yes	1	/	3	3	Engaged	emoji in each caption and use of extra element
07/02/2024	4	Starting 11 am ending at 7 pm	Focus on F1 driver and car and history	yes	2	1	2	3	Medium	emoji in each caption and use of extra element
08/02/2024	3	Starting at 12:55 pm ending at 5 pm	Throwback, and Formula One car	yes	2	1	1	5	Low	emoji in each caption and use of extra element
09/02/2024	7	Starting at 11 am ending at 8 pm	F1 focus from materials to car	yes	2	1	4	8	Medium	emoji in each caption and use of extra element
10/02/2024	2	Starting at 10:15 am ending at 5:30 pm	Testing F1 Barcelona	yes	/	1	1	1	Engaged	emoji in each caption and use of extra element
11/02/2024	4	Starting at 12:30 pm ending at 7 pm	Backstage of testing in Barcelona	yes	/	4	/	1	Engaged	emoji in each caption and use of extra element
12/02/2024	4	Starting at 10:30 ending at 8 pm	Clothes merchandise, promotion and testing	yes	2	1	1	9	Medium	emoji in each caption and use of extra element
13/02/2024	3	Starting at 12 pm ending at 9 pm	Merchandise and teasing car reveal	Yes	1	2	/	5	Low	emoji in each caption and use of extra element
14/02/2024	14	Starting at 10 am ending at 11 pm	F1 car reveal	Yes	8	3	3	16	High	emoji in each caption and use of extra element
15/02/2024	5	Starting at 10 am ending at 8 pm	Reiss clothes collaboration	Yes	2	3	/	13	Medium/ Engaged	emoji in each caption and use of extra element
16/02/2024	6	Starting at 10:30 am ending at 9 pm	Headquarters, photoshoot & other league MCL	yes	3	3	/	2	Medium/ Engaged	emoji in each caption and use of extra element
17/02/2024	2	Starting at 11:10 ending at 3:30 pm	Backstage photoshoot	Yes	/	2	/	1	Medium	emoji in each caption and use of extra element
18/02/2024	3	Starting 11 am ending at 2:30 pm	Backstage testing, photoshoot	Yes	1	2	/	3	Medium	emoji in each caption and use of extra element
19/02/2024	7	Starting at 10 am ending at 7 pm	Bahrain pre testing & buckstage	Yes	4	1	2	6	Engaged	emoji in each caption and use of extra element
20/02/2024	8	Starting at 10 am ending at 9 pm	Bahrain pre testing & merchandise	Yes	1	4	3	11	Medium	emoji in each caption and use of extra element
21/02/2024	15	Starting at 8 am ending at 10 pm	Testing Day One Bahrain	Yes	10	3	2	15	Engaged / High	emoji in each caption and use of extra element
22/02/2024	9	Starting at 6:40 am ending at 9 pm	Testing Day two & some insights	Yes	4	3	2	9	Engaged	emoji in each caption and use of extra element
23/02/2024	8	Starting at 10:40 ending at 9 pm	Testing Day three	Yes	4	1	3	7	Medium/ Engaged	emoji in each caption and use of extra element
24/02/2024	4	Starting at 9 am ending at 6 pm	Variation from testing to throwbacks memories	Yes	1	1	2	/	Low/ Medium	emoji in each caption and use of extra element
25/02/2024	5	Starting at 10:30 am ending at 9 pm	Throwback testing days	Yes	3	2	/	1	Medium	emoji in each caption and use of extra element
26/02/2024	6	Starting at 9 am ending at 8 pm	First week race: testing and insights	Yes	2	2	2	2	Medium	emoji in each caption and use of extra element
27/02/2024	8	Starting at 9:10 ending at 10 pm	Variation of subjects	Yes	3	3	2	14	Medium	emoji in each caption and use of extra element
28/02/2024	10	Starting at 9:45 am ending 9 pm	Bahrain insights race week	Yes	3	6	1	9	Medium/ Engaged	emoji in each caption and use of extra element
29/02/2024	10	Starting at 10:30 am ending at 9:30 pm	Free testing dat (pre race)	Yes	2	5	3	20	Engaged	emoji in each caption and use of extra element
01/03/2024	11	Starting at 10 am ending 9 pm	Qualifying day	Yes	3	4	4	20	High	emoji in each caption and use of extra element
02/03/2024	18	Starting at 9 am ending at 9 pm	Race Day	Yes	6	2	9	26	Engaged	emoji in each caption and use of extra element
Total	205				81	72	66	239	Medium (16) Engaged (15)	

Appendix 3: Table 4 – extract of the summary of McLaren and Ferrari communications regarding the number of posts per day and stories observing days, weeks, and weeks ends of the analysed period.

	Ferrari		McLaren	
Day of publications	Ferrari: Publications in Feed	Ferrari: Stories	McLaren: Publications in Feed	McLaren: Stories
1 st of February 2024 Thursday	4	2	6	7
2 nd of February 2024 Friday	3	2	8	13
3 rd of February 2024 Saturday	2	/	4	4
4 th of February 2024 Sunday	2	/	5	4
8 th of February 2024 Thursday	5	1	3	5
9 th of February 2024 Friday	4	1	7	8
10 th of February 2024 Saturday	4	/	2	1
11 th of February 2024 Sunday	3	/	4	1
15 th of February 2024 Thursday	4	2	5	13
16 th of February 2024 Friday	4	2	6	2
17 th of February 2024 Saturday	4	/	2	1

Appendix 4: Calculation of McLaren and Ferrari's average engagement

To calculate each team's average engagement, we must use the numerical values indicated when we want to make qualitative categories quantifiable and appropriate for mathematical processes such as averaging. Numerical values are numbers assigned to them. By transforming qualitative data (such as Low and medium) into quantitative data (numbers), these values enable us to calculate an average engagement score in the context of engagement levels.

Before going deeper, we need to assign numerical values to each engagement level and establish a scale that will reflect the intensity and importance of each engagement during the month.

So, the way of assigning will be that the higher the level, the more the numerical values will reflect.

Here are the following engagement levels:

Low: As it is the lowest level of engagement, the assigned values will be the lowest **1**.

Medium: As it represents moderate engagement, the assigned value is **2**.

Engaged: assigned value **3**.

Medium/ Engaged: assigned value 2,5 as it represents the engagement between medium and engaged.

High: assigned value **4**.

Engaged/ High: The assigned value is **3,5, representing** the engagement between engaged and high.

High: assigned value **5**.

Appendix 5: Table 8- Summary of the assigned Numerical Values to the engagement levels:

Engagement levels	Numerical Assigned Values
Low	1
Medium	2
Engaged	3
Medium/ Engaged	2,5
High	4
Engaged/ High	3,5
Really High	5

The application of the numerical data to calculate the average engagement is the following:

Ferrari engagement levels applied with numerical values:

Levels	Instances	Applied with Numerical Values
Low	1	$1 \times 1 = 1$
Medium	5	$5 \times 2 = 10$
Engaged	13	$13 \times 3 = 39$
Medium/Engaged	2	$2 \times 2,5 = 5$
High	8	$8 \times 4 = 32$
Engaged/ High	1	$1 \times 3,5 = 3,5$
Really high	1	$1 \times 5 = 5$

McLaren engagement levels applied with numerical values:

Levels	Instances	Applied with Numerical Values
Low	3	$3 \times 1 = 3$
Medium	11	$11 \times 2 = 22$
Engaged	10	$10 \times 3 = 30$
Medium/Engaged	4	$4 \times 2,5 = 10$
High	2	$2 \times 4 = 8$
Engaged/ High	1	$1 \times 3,5 = 3,5$
Really high	3	$3 \times 5 = 15$

Ferrari engagement levels applied with numerical values:

Levels	Instances	Applied with Numerical Values
Low	1	1 x 1 = 1
Medium	5	5 x 2 = 10
Engaged	13	13 x 3 = 39
Medium/Engaged	2	2 x 2,5 = 5
High	8	8 x 4 = 32
Engaged/ High	1	1 x 3,5 = 3,5
Really high	1	1 x 5 = 5

McLaren engagement levels applied with numerical values:

Levels	Instances	Applied with Numerical Values
Low	3	3 x 1 = 3
Medium	11	11 x 2 = 22
Engaged	10	10 x 3 = 30
Medium/Engaged	4	4 x 2,5 = 10
High	2	2 x 4 = 8
Engaged/ High	1	1 x 3,5 = 3,5
Really high	3	3 x 5 = 15

The source of the mathematical formulas was explained to me during my internship for *Pretty Wire*, a French fashion brand while doing my fashion luxury bachelor's in Bordeaux. Professor Ines Duhard developed the formula in the course of her work.

Appendix 6: Table 9- Summary of the assigned Numerical Values to the engagement levels calculation for each team (above.):

Calculation:

Average Engagement Ferrari

$$\text{Average engagement} = \frac{(1 \times 1) + (5 \times 2) + (13 \times 3) + (2 \times 2,5) + (8 \times 4) + (1 \times 3,5)}{31}$$

$$\text{Average engagement} = \frac{1 + 10 + 39 + 5 + 32 + 3,5 + 5}{31}$$

$$\text{Average engagement} = \frac{95,5}{31}$$

$$\text{Average engagement} = 3,8$$

Average Engagement McLaren

$$\text{Average engagement} = \frac{(3 \times 1) + (11 \times 2) + (10 \times 3) + (4 \times 2,5) + (2 \times 4) + (1 \times 3,5) + (3 \times 5)}{31}$$

$$\text{Average engagement} = \frac{3 + 22 + 30 + 10 + 8 + 3,5 + 15}{31}$$

$$\text{Average engagement} = \frac{91,5}{31}$$

$$\text{Average engagement} = 2,95$$

So, throughout the calculation, we can observe that the *Ferrari* Average Engagement is 3,08 for the analysed period, situating that average engagement between engaged and high engagement.

For the *McLaren* team, it is a *McLaren* Average Engagement of 2,95, situating it between medium and engaged engagement.

Those calculations show that *Ferrari* had a higher engagement level than the *McLaren* team during the content analysis. (Duhard, 2021)

Appendix 7: Table 13 - Summary of publications times during the analysed period

Day	McLaren- Publication time	Ferrari- Publication time
01/02/24	Starting at 12pm ending at 11 pm	Starting at 12 pm ending at 9:40 pm
02/02/24	Starting at 8 am ending at 8 pm	Starting at 10 am ending at 4 pm
03/02/24	Starting at 9 am ending at 6 pm	Starting at 12 pm ending at 4 pm
04/02/24	Starting at 9 am ending at 7 pm	Starting at 11 am ending at 7 pm
05/02/24	Starting at 1:30 pm ending at 4 pm	Starting at 11 am ending at 6 pm
06/02/24	Starting at 11 am ending at 7 pm	Starting at 12 pm ending at 6 pm
07/02/24	Starting 11 am ending at 7 pm	Starting at 11 am ending at 7 pm
08/02/24	Starting at 12:55 pm ending at 5 pm	Starting at 10 am ending at 8 pm
09/02/24	Starting at 11 am ending at 8 pm	Starting at 10:30 ending at 7 pm
10/02/24	Starting at 10:15 am ending at 5:30 pm	Starting at 11:30 am ending at 5 pm
11/02/24	Starting at 12:30 pm ending at 7 pm	Starting at 11 am ending at 6 pm
12/02/24	Starting at 10:30 ending at 8 pm	Starting at 9:30 am ending at 6 pm
13/02/24	Starting at 12 pm ending at 9 pm	Starting at 9 am ending at 8 pm
14/02/24	Starting at 10 am ending at 11 pm	Starting at 10 am ending at 8 pm
15/02/24	Starting at 10 am ending at 8 pm	Starting at 10 am ending at 6 pm
16/02/24	Starting at 10:30 am ending at 9 pm	Starting at 10 am ending at 5 pm
17/02/24	Starting at 11:10 ending at 3:30 pm	Starting at 9 am ending at 7 pm
18/02/24	Starting 11 am ending at 2:30 pm	Starting at 10 am ending at 5 pm
19/02/24	Starting at 10 am ending at 7 pm	Starting at 10:30 ending at 8 pm
20/02/24	Starting at 10 am ending at 9 pm	Starting at 10:30 ending at 7 pm
21/02/24	Starting at 8 am ending at 10 pm	Starting at 8:25 am ending at 10 pm
22/02/24	Starting at 6:40 am ending at 9 pm	Starting at 10 am ending at 9 pm
23/02/24	Starting at 10:40 ending at 9 pm	Starting at 7 am ending at 9 pm
24/02/24	Starting at 9 am ending at 6 pm	Starting at 10 am ending at 6 pm
25/02/24	Starting at 10:30 am ending at 9 pm	Starting at 11 am ending at 5 pm
26/02/24	Starting at 9 am ending at 8 pm	Starting at 11:30 am ending at 8 pm
27/02/24	Starting at 9:10 ending at 10 pm	Starting at 9 am ending at 6 pm
28/02/24	Starting at 9:45 am ending 9 pm	Starting at 9 am ending at 9 pm
29/02/24	Starting at 10:30 am ending at 9:30 pm	Starting at 10:30 am ending at 10 pm

1/03/24	Starting at 10 am ending 9 pm	Starting at 9:30 am ending at 8 pm
2/03/24	Starting at 9 am ending at 9 pm	Starting at 9 am ending at 10 pm

The table above shows each team's timeframe for each day and when the interaction happened, meaning when they started to post and when they ended it.