Formula One on social networks: a successful strategy

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La Fórmula 1 en las redes sociales: una estrategia eficaz

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ABSTRACT: This research, aims to analyze the dynamics of engagement rate of F1 through the social networks of the car teams participating in the FIA championship. Classical media are now incorporated and integrated with the production of new media: publications that invite supporters interacting, thus recreating a virtual agora, a community federated by online exchange, around real-time multimedia productions. A communication mix that allows an international championship to be within the reach of each supporter. The research conducted aims to analyze, with a quantitative methodology, the Engagement Rate, of the 10 teams participating in the 2021 championship on Facebook and Instagram.

KEYWORDS: Formula One; digital communication; social network; engagement; fans.

RESUMEN: *Esta investigación analiza el grado de implicación en la F1 a través de las redes sociales de los equipos que participan en el Campeonato de la FIA. Los medios de comunicación clásicos se complementan ahora a través de la producción de nuevos medios: publicaciones que invitan a los aficionados a interactuar, recreando así un ágora virtual, una comunidad federada por el intercambio en línea, en torno a producciones multimedia en tiempo real. La investigación realizada tiene como objetivo analizar, con una metodología cuantitativa, el Engagement Rate de los 10 equipos participantes en el campeonato de 2021, en Facebook e Instagram.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: Fórmula 1; comunicación digital; red social; engagement; fans.

Introduction

Formula 1 has become the sport with the highest audience share ever (Activity Report, FIA 2021) and has not attracted such a large audience in a long time. Formula 1 has always been successful on a large scale, but it was only last season that the cumulative audience reached 87.4 million viewers. The acquisition of Formula 1 in 2017, by the Liberty Media group, made it possible to develop a communication strategy aimed at attracting a younger audience and to expand on social networks, in particular Instagram and Facebook, thus attracting a very large audience. These same viewers are Internet users who follow the news about their favourite team and driver day after day. This large media coverage of the sport also allows competing brands to have a large audience. Attracting a younger, more involved audience is part of the FIA's objectives to attract the younger generation, especially through three aspects (Activity Report, FIA 2021) such as creating accessible programmes and opportunities, engaging young people by developing new ways of understanding their needs and through specific communication, retaining young people by remaining relevant to them within the FIA community. A first sign of strategic change is the constant and consistent use of the Instagram profile, with content that is different from the other two social networks, Facebook and Twitter, intended for a different, more adult audience and with a rather informative purpose, already well used and performing as demonstrated by the study conducted on pilots by Girón Santon (2015), who already in 2014 spoke of a "2.0 phenomenon" due to the considerable increase in connectivity and interactive users.

The research presented here, dedicated to Formula One and the new media that have given it new mediatic visibility, aims to analyse the dynamics of the F1 engagement rate through the social networks of the car teams participating in the FIA championship. The aim is to understand whether the integrated communication strategy, through the use of multimedia channels, has fostered public engagement. The research shows in quantitative terms, how active fan engagement is on the part of the Formula 1 teams, i.e. whether fan engagement on social networks varies according to the sporting results of each team. Furthermore, do the teams participating in the Formula 1 championship use different communication strategies (from tweeting to more traditional press) in line with the FIA? Through the re-analysis of the literature and through the data collected, we would like to emphasise how in the cultural industry, here represented by the media system, the elements of continuity and change, favour the return of experience and audience in this specific case.

1. Literature review

The consumption of sport has completely changed since the advent of social media in this area. It used to be an area dominated by broadcasting, but now it is

more complex and offers fans a more participative experience than in the past. Indeed, Formula 1 has seen the development of a mobile application in which the principle is to immerse oneself in the skin of a driver and be close to the action. Experiencing events such as Formula 1 is very complicated because races are held all over the world and the price of tickets to attend them is becoming less and less affordable. Fans who are networked, mobile, interactive and connected between different online platforms (Miller *et al.*, 2016) tend to turn to a cheaper alternative, such as social media, to keep up to date with the sport they are passionate about. Sports already have an existing fan base with a high level of loyalty (Williams & Chinn, 2010), which has made it easy for a brand like F1 to exploit social media to its full potential. Blogs and Twitter brought a completely new idea of sports media, according to which athletes, teams and fans should actively produce content (Kassing & Sanderson, 2010). Improvements and developments in technology in recent years have brought professional sports athletes closer to what they experience on a daily basis, with a rewarding impact on the lives of those interested in the events an athlete or team may face (Miller *et al.*, 2016). They have also helped cultivate a new multi–platform experience that would not have existed with only one platform. This enables a complementary media experience for fans, who can now talk to each other, share their opinions, find information about their favourite club and interact with athletes. In a way, it is not a matter of erasing the so-called traditional media, which are not forgotten, but only complemented by the use of other media platforms to feel and experience a unique and personalised experience through screens such as social media, blogs, websites and other types of online content related to what is shown on television (Proulx & Shepatin, 2012) integrating the new cultural industry.

The term communication applies not only to media, but also to interpersonal and stakeholder communication, playing an important role in the development of sport and positing itself as "a process through which people in sport, in a sporting environment, or through a sporting enterprise share symbols and create meaning through interaction" (Pedersen, 2007). Witkemper, Blaszka and Chung (2016) identified four types of users of different social media in sport: cooperative users, competitive users, proactive users and passive users. Co-operative users have with low-interactivity content, as opposed to high activity where individuals use social media to find promotions, reviews or media coverage for a given sporting entity (Witkemper *et al.*, 2016). The competition community has high activity and high interactivity elements in the use of social media in sport, including interactive competition after competition with live fan interaction and the creation of interactive competitions. Users belonging to the proactive community show high interactivity and low activity by providing opinions and other types of information. Passive community content has low interactivity and activity, including content such as story coverage, forums and blogs. Looking at the communication carried out by Formula 1 championship teams, it is possi-

ble to distinguish three objectives: to speak to their community of fans and supporters; to speak to people who watch the sport without necessarily being subscribers to the teams' accounts; to highlight the teams' partners'' (Tribou, Dermit and Wojak, 2018) such as Tommy Hilfiger for Mercedes or Ray-Ban for Ferrari. The project aims to build loyalty and attract consumers and partners. With this in mind, good communication nowadays is a guarantee of professional success and plays a predominant role in enhancing the team's reputation among fans. Nowadays, social networks are used by many people and occupy a large part of our day. Out of a global population of 7.91 billion people, there are approximately 5.31 billion mobile users (67.1%), 4.95 billion users connected to the Internet (62.5%) and 4.62 billion people active in at least one social media (58.4%). On average, worldwide, an Internet user spends 6 hours and 58 minutes a day connected to the Internet, of which 3 hours and 43 minutes using a smartphone. (We Are Social & Hootsuite, 2022)

The emergence of these new modes of communication fosters even more the culture of being efficient or not being noticed. And this is something that the big brands have understood well, first in the business world and now in the world of sport, it has become essential and the users of social networks are the protagonists of these communication dynamics (Charon, 2011). The strength of social networks lies in the number of people who use the platform by publishing content. The content that is created on them is a unique material resource, which brings a financial resource, the more people there are on their platform, the more importance they will have and therefore more companies or in this case sports teams will integrate them to multiply their visibility. Social networks seen at first as tools, platforms and applications that enable consumers to connect, communicate and collaborate with others, at the same time support user participation on a collective basis. (William & Chinn, 2010), but equally as new media technologies that facilitate interactivity and co-creation and enable the development and sharing of user-generated content between organisations (e.g. racing teams, agencies and media groups) and individuals (subscribers, sportsmen, journalists). (Filo, Lock and Karg, 2015) enable a better understanding of the communication strategies implemented by Formula 1. The shift to these digital strategies can be identified with the four characteristics pointed out in Charon's studies (2011): immediacy, the shift from the physical to the virtual, but multimedia storytelling and communication mix, and finally the participatory characteristic. Social media is a new way for Formula One teams and their drivers to communicate messages without having to rely on third parties, such as television, to share their thoughts. They now have no choice but to find new, unique and innovative ways to communicate in this new digital era to distinguish themselves from other clubs that are no longer just competing on circuits, but also on social media. With an increased focus on marketing, teams are implementing strategies to increase revenues, build fan loyalty and create brands, even more so in the world of sport and Formula 1 (Gensler *et al.*, 2013).

2. **Methods**

This first phase involved a quantitative analysis through the collection of data on publications, comments and followers that made it possible to know the rate of involvement, the rate of activism and the rate of reactivity.

As underlined by the researchers Mazza and Palermo (Sobry & Cernaianu, 2022), the set of information collected is analysed according to a quantitative approach, by means of the construction of special indices to measure the degree of participation, engagement and conversation rates (PTAT). In particular, the Engagement Rate was calculated, an indicator that allows us to understand the rate of user involvement. Knowing this index makes it possible to understand whether the communication strategies implemented adequately involve the users of the page. The Engagement Rate was calculated using the following formula: PTAT/fans★100.

According to Hootsuite (2022), on average, a good engagement rate ranges from 1 to 5%, but the percentages are very variable and depend on both the social network and the followers. In fact, the higher the number of fans, the more difficult it will be to have high engagement rates.

The latest research in the field of social networks and sport, identifies an average Engagement Rate of 0.07% on Facebook and 1.9% on Instagram with an average of 21 publications per week on Facebook and 13 on Instagram (Rival IQ Report, 2023).

<div align="center">Table 1</div>

<div align="center">**Summary of the main indices recorded**</div>

Index	Description	Formulas
PTAT	People Talking About This	number of likes + number of comments + number of shares
ATT	Activisme	number of comments/fans★ 100
ReATT	Reactivisme	(number of shares/number of posts)/(fans/number of posts) ★ 100
ER	Engagement Rate	PTAT / fans★ 100

The formula for the PTAT and the ER is developed by Forrester (2015) while the formulas for calculating the ReATT and the ATT are by researchers Mazza and Palermo (Sobry & Cernaianu, 2022).

In order to have a better visibility of the communication strategies of all Formula 1 teams, the first quarter of 2021, before the resumption of the championship,

was taken into account. This will make it possible to see whether social media engagement is also linked to the month in which the Grand Prix resumes. The official Instagram and Facebook accounts of the 10 teams participating in the Formula One championship were examined.

After a preliminary analysis conducted on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and TikTok, to verify the presence of the indices (identity, presence, relations, reputation) used for the selection of cases on the presence of the racing teams on the social networks, it seemed appropriate to conduct the survey on Facebook, which is nowadays considered as essential as having an official website, as well as the most used social network in the world, and on Instagram, which is younger, innovative and complementary. Twitter was not considered due to its predominantly informational and less interactive nature in terms of content; and TikTok, as it was an emerging social network at the time of the research and did not meet the presence criteria of all the racing teams belonging to the championship taken into consideration.

As anticipated then, the official profiles were analysed according to a series of requirements, indexes, the official profiles were analysed according to a series of requirements to identify their originality: identity with the blue tick, the team's logo or photo, the "official" name; the direct presence of the team through original messages and publications; relationships with the presence of comments and shares and finally reputation, identified through the large number of followers. The body of research is 571 publications and 96901 on Facebook, and on Instagram with 540 and 207383 comments in total.

Following the re-analysis of the literature, the question is whether the social media activities of the teams participating in the Formula 1 championship are in line with the FIA's objectives and whether the engagement rate reflects what has been said so far in terms of fan relations and media visibility. The hypotheses formulated as a result of the literature review are therefore as follows:

— H1: Formula 1 teams use Facebook and Instagram to build a good level of online community engagement.
— H2: The engagement rate of Facebook and Instagram is correlated with sporting results.
— H3: Facebook and Instagram postings are more frequent during the championship.

In order to get a better insight into the communication strategies of all Formula 1 teams, the analysis focuses on the first quarter of 2021, to find out the level of engagement of the teams on social networks in the immediate months before the championship resumed and the month of the restart.

3. **Results**

The racing teams have a good presence on both Facebook and Instagram, with a very interested number of followers. In this first summary table, ranking the teams in order of popularity on social networks, we can see that the success in terms of followers is indisputable.

TABLE 2

The racing teams on Facebook and Instagram

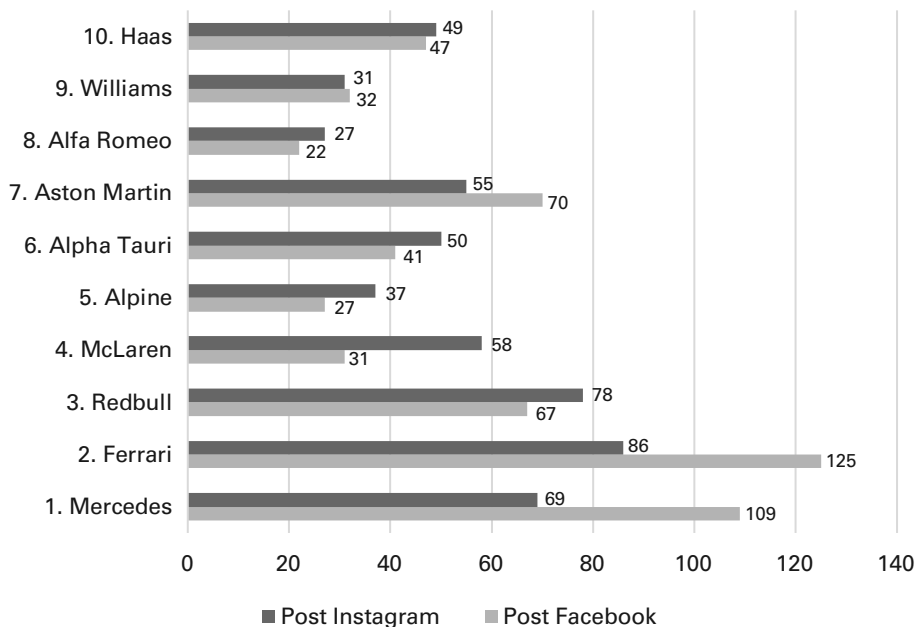| Teams	Followers FB	Followers Instagram
Mercedes	**11,311,307**	**6,900,000**
Ferrari	**4,491,763**	**6,300,000**
Redbull	**10,190,607**	5,600,000
McLaren	3,816,630	**7,100,000**
Alpino	2,164,859	1,900,000
Alfa Tauri	1,059,767	1,600,000
Aston Martin	1,084,013	1,600,000
Alfa Romeo	633,035	1,300,000
Williams	897,755	1,500,000
Haas	357,577	1,400,000

Source: authors' elaboration.

Mercedes and Ferrari quickly emerge in the top positions on both Facebook and Instagram, the history and heritage of the two teams touching a wide audience.

Concerning content, the following graph allows us to note that in terms of publications, for the same period, Facebook is most used by Ferrari, Mercedes and Aston Martin, in contrast to younger racing teams with communication strategies that are already noticeable due to the nature of their corporate identity, such as Redbull, McLaren and Alpha Tauri.

In particular, referring instead to the content of the publications on the two social networks examined, the difference in publication is about 30 more on Facebook, but despite this, the content is balanced on the two socials between photos and videos. However, the publication of posts with links to articles or external content emerges exclusively on FB, something that was not present on Instagram during the period of the

survey. It should be remembered that on Instagram, "stories", which are only available for 24 hours and have a high level of interactivity, allow easy access to content shared via links. A posteriori research does not allow these temporary productions to be examined.

Team	Post Instagram	Post Facebook
10. Haas	49	47
9. Williams	31	32
8. Alfa Romeo	27	22
7. Aston Martin	55	70
6. Alpha Tauri	50	41
5. Alpine	37	27
4. McLaren	58	31
3. Redbull	78	67
2. Ferrari	86	125
1. Mercedes	69	109

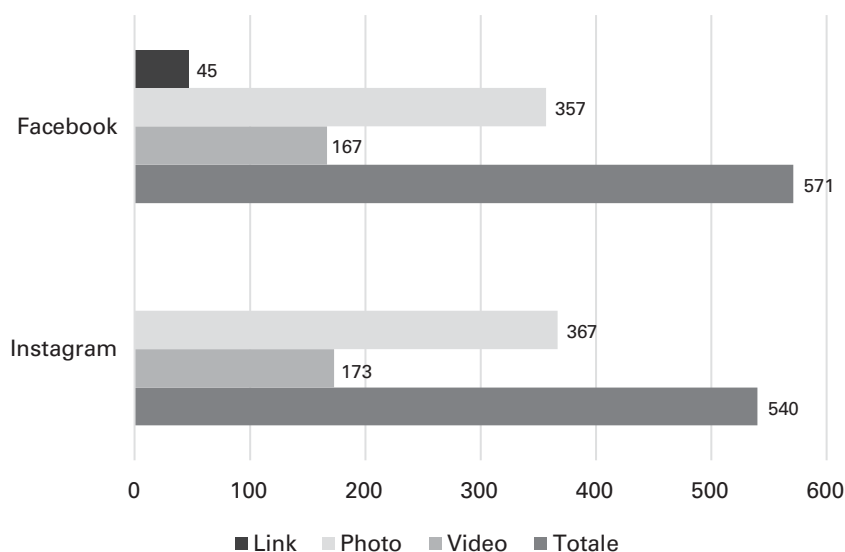*Source:* authors' elaboration.

FIGURE 1

Posts by Formula 1 racing teams on Facebook and Instagram

Mercedes, by number of followers on FB is one of the three most followed teams. Not surprisingly, it is the world champion team of the last seven years, in which the driver Lewis Hamilton, reigning world champion, also competes. Their communication strategy, based mainly on Facebook, offers mainly photographic content, especially around the season's start, limiting the use of videos.

Ferrari has had some difficulties in terms of sporting results in recent years, but can count on the support of many fans and a rich motor racing history that makes it attractive despite the results. The value of the team, which has made its brand a brand of reputation, is recognised worldwide. Ferrari use video content more on Instagram than on Facebook compared to Mercedes, which varies its digital strategy little. In terms of publications, for example in the week of the season's resumption, from 22 to 28 March 2021, Ferrari published as many as 40 posts on Instagram and 50 on Facebook. In contrast, in the pre-season weeks,

videos and links with references and insights are more used as a type of content, albeit with fewer publications during the week. The publications of the week where the engagement rate is high are those in which important changes in the team are announced, such as the change of drivers (Carlos Sainz joins Ferrari in place of Sebastian Vettel). The total ER on Instagram is less important than Mercedes, but it is still high.

So, in terms of engagement, the two racing teams also maintain very good results on Facebook, as can be seen in Table 2. The teams are presented in order of ranking to allow one to quickly see that there is no correlation between championship position and engagement rate.

Source: authors' elaboration.

FIGURE 2

Types of content posted

In this table dedicated to Facebook, it can be seen that January is a relatively calm month, in which no relevant data emerges for RedBull, Alpine, and Alpha Tauri, for example. Almost half of the teams therefore do not initiate a communication from the outset, but the situation changes as early as February where values begin to be representative, and then in March, when the championship resumes, there is good engagement. On average, the rate is considered positive on Facebook when it is between 2% and 3% (Adobe, 2022). So we can say that although the start was slow, the teams in the first quarter are within the average.

TABLE 3

The ER on Facebook

ER on Facebook				
Teams	January	February	March	Average ER
Mercedes	3.39	3.28	7.48	4.71
Redbull	0.81	3.55	4.55	2.97
Ferrari	**6.24**	**4.98**	**7.57**	**6.26**
McLaren	1.36	0.35	4.71	2.14
Alpine	0.25	0.31	1.22	0.59
Alpha Tauri	1.57	2.08	4.85	2.83
Aston Martin	**4.86**	2.75	9.08	5.56
Alfa Romeo	0.05	**10.11**	11.32	**7.16**
Williams	2.59	1.39	4.94	2.97
Haas	**5.12**	**11.69**	**17.72**	**11.51**

Source: authors' elaboration.

TABLE 4

The ER on Instagram

| Teams	January	February	March	Average ER
Mercedes	2.17	2.79	2.78	2.58
Redbull	1.83	2.53	2.38	2.24
Ferrari	2.05	1.88	1.45	1.79
McLaren	1.20	0.88	1.41	1.16
Alpine	0.26	0.67	1.41	0.78
Alpha Tauri	2.52	3.86	1.39	2.59
Aston Martin	6.83	3.42	2.74	4.33
Alfa Romeo	0.77	4.40	3.22	2.79
Williams	1.73	1.58	1.24	1.51
Haas	1.43	3.08	2.28	2.26

Source: authors' elaboration.

In Table 3 dedicated to Instagram, the situation is different. The Engagement Rate has values that, although low, are well within the European average. Aston Martin's

ER peak in January (6,83%) should be noted, probably due to the announcement of the team's grand prix entry after 61 years and the news about future drivers (Vettel and Stroll). The case of Alpine (ER average 0,78%) is also a separate matter, with the change of identity in January and therefore needing to rebuild its community. The same thing happens with Haas, which has announced Mike Schumacher as one of its drivers.

However, what is noticeable when we go deeper into the analysis is that the teams with the highest number of supporters have an engagement rate that varies very little, the standard deviation is very high and it is lower among the teams with the highest number of supporters.

If we refer to the engagement rate, we can see that the position in the standings does not have a clear correlation with fan engagement on social networks.

In order to better understand what is happening among the communities, we have two indices to orient the research: the rate of activism and the rate of reactivity.
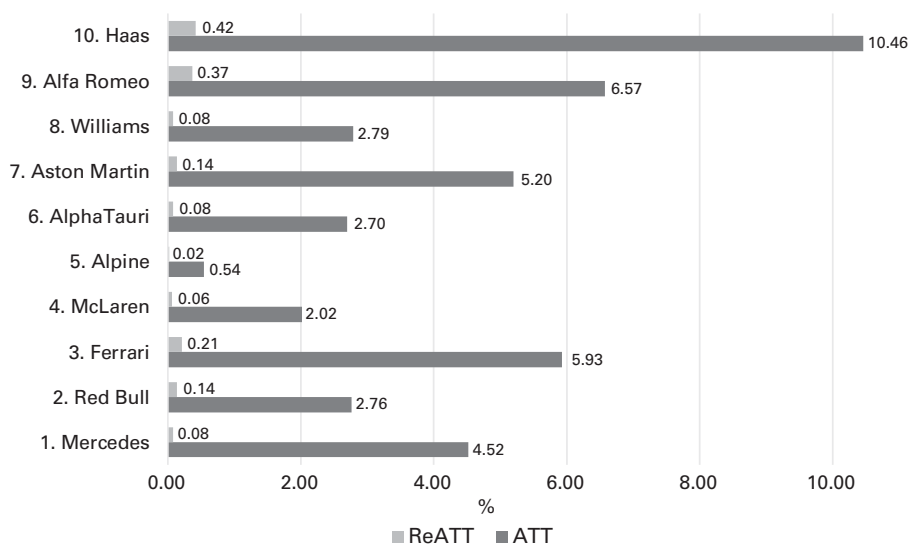
Source: authors' elaboration.

FIGURE 3

Activism on social networks

The first implies simply liking the post, while the second takes into account comments and shares, thus seeing an active reaction from the user. There are two different types of users on social networks. The active user only appreciates publica-

tions, while the reactive user shares and comments on publications, bringing more impact to the page. The latter shares the team's publications, spreading the content among users and thus expanding the circle of users participating in the discussion. Formula 1 teams and brands must therefore seek interaction rather than a simple "like" that goes no further.

The calculation of activism is useful to get the percentage of supporters who like the publications, while the calculation of reactivism is more complex because it allows for the percentage of subscribers who share and comment on the publications.

The values we have are very low, but this is not a figure to cause concern, especially considering the ER of the individual profiles. Haas, Alfa Romeo, Ferrari, Aston Martini and Mercedes have a good index of both activism and reactivity. Again, RedBull emerges as a relevant team, considering the rate of reactivity versus activism. Looking at this graph of the rate of activism, it can be seen that the Haas team is particularly performing and deserves a deeper discussion. This American team has been competing in the Formula 1 championship for less than 10 years and although it is not exactly competitive on the ground, it has some very engaging communication strategies, American style. Probably, these results are also thanks to Drive to Survive, the Netflix series, which devoted almost its entire first season to this team. Postings on social media are in equal measure, both on Facebook and Instagram, especially in the week before the Grand Prix. His level of engagement is about 18% on Facebook and 3% on Instagram. This is very simple due to a limitation of the formula that measures engagement: the fewer followers, the greater the engagement, according to a logic of active participation. And this explains why the team manages to involve its supporters.

It must be remembered, therefore, that despite the poor results in sporting terms, the Haas team has the highest involvement rate of all the teams, also in terms of the activism of followers who comment, share and like.

It is clear, however, that overall, the social media engagement rate does not correlate with championship position, as shown by what we have just seen and how, for example, Mercedes, the reigning world champion team in 2021, should be the one with the best engagement rate, yet we see that it is ahead of the teams playing for the last places. Still a team like Alpine, which has a good race performance, has the lowest involvement rate among the teams.

It is also evident that the engagement rate is higher when there are competitions: teams post more when they know they have more audience. Social media engagement is lower when there are no grand prix. If in the months without races the engagement rate is lower, in the month of restart all teams actively communicate on social media.

4. **Discussions**

As a result of this global analysis presented here, it is possible to answer the starting hypotheses by confirming 3 out of 2. H1 is confirmed as it is clear from the engagement rate and activism percentages that all the teams participating in the 2021 championship used social networks in an engaging manner, touching the communities with digital communication strategies dedicated to the online public. Closely linked to this first hypothesis is H3. The tables with the monthly results show how at the resumption of the championship all teams implemented their presence on social networks, marking differences with the previous months in which, with the exception of a few teams, the involvement rate was stable, although still positive.

H2 deserves a separate discussion, as it is not confirmed. In fact, based on sporting performance and end-of-change rankings, being in the top positions is not always synonymous with a higher engagement rate on social networks. An example is the Haas team, despite finishing the championship as last in the rankings, has one of the best-performing engagement levels on Facebook (11.5%) and a good result on Instagram (2.26%), presenting itself perfectly within the average.

Since its arrival in Formula 1 in 2017, the Liberty Media group has continued to increase fan engagement, particularly through more content on social networks. Thanks to this communication strategy and the launch of the Netflix series "Drive to Survive", the American company has been able to attract a new audience, younger, more female and by retaining the existing one. They managed to modernise the image of F1, which seemed tired and lacking in momentum under the previous owners. Their objective was clear: to revitalise a competition in decline in terms of spectators and fans. As already mentioned, between 2006 and 2017 there was a sharp decline in spectator numbers. In 2006, 600 million people worldwide watched at least 15 minutes of Formula 1 in a year. Before Liberty Media took over Formula One in 2017, their numbers had dropped to 350 million, almost halved. The first season of the series "Drive to Survive" marked the first real breakthrough in Liberty Media's strategy. Filmed in 2018 and broadcast in March 2019, it quickly attracted a new, young and curious audience. The series was a success and entered the top ten most watched documentaries on the platform in its year of release. The doors of the paddock open, allowing viewers to discover a sport that is not just about cars competing on a circuit. The series gives a face to drivers rarely seen during races, allowing them to be humanised, to see rivalries between teammates, their emotions when faced with the difficulty of performing or in the face of good performances.

Formula 1 has succeeded in its first challenge: to identify with its drivers and teams. The series has attracted new fans, making the discipline more attractive, more modern. According to a survey published on Formula 1's official website in February 2021, 71% of the 6,000 fans surveyed rate their satisfaction of being an F1 fan

with a score of 8/10 or higher, up from 44% in 2019 (Formula1.com, 2021). As of today (2022), Formula 1's profile has around 11 million followers on Facebook, more than 17 million on Instagram and just over 7 million on Twitter. Highlights, on-board cameras, statistics, decipherments: the content is numerous and adapted to each social network. In addition, some fans considered "experts" have surfed the wave and offer videos on YouTube with analyses, forecasts, etc. Much appreciated. This importance of accompanying the viewer is perceived through visual retransmission.

5. **Conclusions**

The advent of social media in the 21st century has been incredibly unique and a great testament to the technological and technical improvements that have occurred due to the globalisation of the world. This has allowed the world to connect and break down the geographical barriers that previously existed. The sports industry has been strongly influenced by these new media that have provided a modern way of interacting with other actors in sport. In professional sports, this revolutionary tool has allowed teams and riders to get closer to their fans and have fans all over the world. Social media allows them to understand what is being said about them, leading them to find new and creative ways to adapt to a different approach. Large media groups like Liberty Media have seen the opportunity to have a large audience around the world, which is not insignificant. This popularity of sport, with direct access to it through free social networks, is seen as an opportunity by other brands that take advantage of these sports and athletes to sell their products.

Indeed, self-presentation on social networks has a primary purpose which is to influence others in a positive way and to create an image that matches the individual's identity (Hull, 2014; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Lebel & Danylchuk, 2012). This is an important aspect of developing team and athlete brands that can potentially lead to sponsorship contracts, as it is very multifunctional. Sponsors are increasingly looking on social media for who they can invest in, who has the richest and most interesting community: the more followers or likes on a social media page, the more sponsors will be interested in sharing their image and brand with them. Teams can use their social media through product endorsement, in which they use their image, popularity, fame and that of their drivers to propose products of a brand partner in order to personally benefit from the agreement.

In conclusion, we can say that again, the advent of social media in the 21st century has been incredibly unique and a great testament to the technological and technical improvements that have occurred due to the globalisation of the world. This has allowed the world to connect and break down all geographical barriers that previously existed. As for professional sports, such as Formula One, this revolution-

ary tool has allowed teams and drivers to get closer to their fans and have fans all over the world.

As with Formula One, the awareness of being managed by large media groups such as Liberty Media has given the opportunity to reach out to the world in the true sense of the word, bringing them closer to a faithful and non-faithful audience.

This popularisation of sports with direct access through free social networks is seen as an opportunity by other brands that exploit these sports and sportsmen to sell their products.

This review has made it possible to highlight how the dynamics of communication in sports management have changed to this day and how they deserve in-depth analysis and special attention where content and interactions between teams, drivers and fans are part of a new process of media integration, which is indisputable nowadays.

This study allowed an initial insight into the approach to social networks of the racing teams participating in the Formula 1 championship. Since this is a constantly evolving sector, as in any other technological field, the results collected up to now can be considered as preliminary for other studies on the subject. In fact, in recent months, the growing TikTok phenomenon has emerged, which is currently in full expansion due to its virality and which is increasingly being adopted by communication practices in the field of sport and major events, even though not all racing teams currently have an official profile on this social network. It should also be emphasised that, when we talk about car corporations, we are talking about companies and that, consequently, the communication strategies used by the car corporations in question are an integral part of the new management strategies that are emerging in the post-pandemic society aimed at a marketing approach as well as a communicational one. (Desbordes, 2020)

It would therefore seem useful, as a future perspective and a current limitation, to extend this research to TikTok too and it might also be interesting to investigate the possible presence of the drivers as team ambassadors of their racing team during the live Twitch (the social live streaming platform, notable in the gaming and esport sector).

So, this data is only a first step in analysing a rapidly developing digital industry.

Specific contribution and author's order

Both authors contributed to study conception and design, data collection and analysis and interpretation of results. Draft manuscript preparation was done by A. Palermo.

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