ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Psychological resilience, emotional regulation, and performance pressure in Formula One: A documentary thematic analysis of public driver narratives

Pavithra Sankara Subramanian . *Department of Psychology. CMR University. Bengaluru, Karnataka, India.*

ABSTRACT

Formula One (F1) represents one of the most psychologically demanding environments in elite sport, requiring athletes to perform under conditions of extreme cognitive workload, physiological strain, public scrutiny, and competitive uncertainty. Despite growing recognition of athlete mental health and well-being, limited research has explored how Formula One drivers themselves construct and interpret experiences of performance pressure, emotional regulation, resilience, and identity across their careers. This study employed a documentary, media-based Reflexive Thematic Analysis, informed by a critical realist epistemology, to examine how elite Formula One drivers publicly construct experiences of performance pressure, emotional regulation, resilience, and identity. Data were drawn from publicly available press conference transcripts, podcasts, and published interviews involving 14 current and former Formula One drivers. Analysis was guided by contemporary frameworks of psychological resilience, athletic identity, and transactional stress appraisal. Four interrelated themes were generated: (1) The Dualism of Perfectionism and Self-Blame, (2) Preternatural Equanimity and Functional Appraisal, (3) Narrative Identity and Career Reconstruction, (4) The Interplay of Cognitive Control, Adversity, and Mental Toughness. Findings suggest that, as publicly narrated, resilience in Formula One is not presented as a fixed personality trait but as a dynamic process shaped by cognitive appraisal, emotional regulation, social support, and identity development. These findings provide an account of how drivers construct and communicate psychological adaptation for public audiences, rather than direct evidence of their underlying psychological states. The study contributes to the emerging literature on athlete mental health by providing insight into how psychological adaptation is publicly represented and communicated within one of the world's most demanding sporting contexts. Implications for sport psychology practice, athlete welfare, and integrated mental health support systems in elite motorsport are discussed.

Keywords: Formula One; emotional regulation; psychological resilience; athletic identity; sport psychology; performance pressure.

Cite this article as:
Subramanian, P. S. (2027). Psychological resilience, emotional regulation, and performance pressure in Formula One: A documentary thematic analysis of public driver narratives. *Journal of Human Sport and Exercise, 22*(1), 303-320. https://doi.org/10.55860/kr91dq48

Corresponding author. *Department of Psychology. CMR University. Bengaluru, Karnataka, India.*
E-mail: pavithrassubramanian@gmail.com
Submitted for publication August 08, 2026.
Accepted for publication September 21, 2026.
Published November 24, 2026.
Journal of Human Sport and Exercise. ISSN 1988-5202.
©Asociación Española de Análisis del Rendimiento Deportivo. Alicante. Spain.
doi: https://doi.org/10.55860/kr91dq48

INTRODUCTION

Formula One requires drivers to integrate physical endurance, cognitive precision, emotional regulation, and rapid decision-making under uncertainty. Drivers must simultaneously manage physiological strain, complex technical information, public scrutiny, and the consequences of high-speed error while maintaining performance. Research on motorsport and driving indicates that perceptual-cognitive skill, attentional control, situational awareness, and psychological adaptation are relevant to performance in this environment (Lappi, 2022).

The physical demands of Formula One further intensify these psychological challenges. During a Grand Prix, drivers experience sustained cardiovascular stress, high cockpit temperatures, fluid loss, and repeated exposure to high gravitational forces, all of which may impair executive functioning, attention, working memory, and psychomotor performance if not effectively managed (Douzi et al., 2020). Consequently, elite performance requires not only exceptional physical preparation but also the ability to preserve cognitive functioning under fatigue and prolonged concentration.

Modern Formula One also places athletes under continuous psychological pressure through intense media attention, public evaluation, contractual uncertainty, and commercial expectations (Colangelo et al., 2024). These demands make emotional regulation, resilience, self-confidence, and identity management central to both performance and psychological well-being. Research increasingly recognizes that adaptation to these pressures is fundamental to sustained success in elite sport (Gezer & Korucuk, 2026).

Despite increasing interest in athlete mental health, Formula One remains comparatively underrepresented within sport psychology. Existing research has largely emphasized physiological performance, cognitive functioning, and technical skill acquisition, with limited attention to how drivers themselves understand experiences of pressure, adversity, resilience, and emotional regulation. Examining these lived experiences offers important insight into the psychological processes underpinning adaptation in one of the world's most demanding sporting environments.

Accordingly, the research question guiding this study is not whether Formula One drivers are psychologically resilient, but how resilience, emotional regulation, and identity are narratively constructed and communicated by drivers within public, media-mediated contexts. This study proposes that such narratives serve a dual function: they may reflect drivers' own self-regulatory processes, while simultaneously operating as a form of public impression management shaped by media training, sponsor expectations, and audience reception. The findings reported below should therefore be read as an account of resilience as it is publicly represented and performed, rather than as direct evidence of drivers' internal psychological states or processes.

Emotional regulation provides a complementary framework for understanding psychological adaptation in elite motorsport. It refers to the processes through which individuals influence which emotions they experience, when they experience them, and how those emotions are expressed and managed (Gross et al., 2006).

Gross's Process Model distinguishes antecedent-focused strategies, implemented before emotional responses develop, from response-focused strategies used after emotions have emerged (Gross, 2014). Cognitive reappraisal, involving the reinterpretation of stressful situations, is consistently associated with improved psychological well-being, lower performance anxiety, and greater resilience. In contrast, expressive

 © 2027 ARD Asociación Española

suppression has been linked to greater physiological strain, emotional exhaustion, and poorer interpersonal functioning.

These dynamics are not unique to motorsport. Elite athletes across high-visibility sports increasingly perform under conditions where private experience and public self-presentation are difficult to disentangle, and where media scrutiny, sponsor relationships, and audience expectations shape how psychological struggle and recovery are. Formula One offers a particularly concentrated case of this broader phenomenon, given its combination of individual visibility, constant media access, and commercial exposure, making it a useful site for examining how resilience is narratively constructed under public evaluation more generally.

Within elite sport, adaptive emotional regulation helps athletes maintain attentional control, decision-making accuracy, and behavioural consistency under pressure, whereas difficulties in regulating emotions may contribute to anxiety, maladaptive perfectionism, burnout, and performance decline. Emotional regulation and resilience are closely interconnected, with adaptive regulation strategies facilitating positive cognitive appraisal and recovery following adversity (Troy et al., 2023).

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employed a qualitative, document-based design informed by Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA; Braun & Clarke, 2019) to examine how elite Formula One drivers publicly construct and communicate experiences of performance pressure, emotional regulation, resilience, and identity. Because the dataset was composed entirely of pre-existing, publicly available media material rather than researcher-elicited interviews, RTA was adapted for use with secondary textual and audiovisual sources. This adaptation preserves RTA's core commitment to the researcher's active, interpretive role in generating themes, while explicitly treating drivers as public commentators on their own experience rather than as consenting research participants. This distinction is conceptually important: unlike interview data, media narratives are shaped by editorial selection, media training, and public-facing self-presentation, and this study analyses drivers' constructed public accounts rather than claiming direct access to private psychological experience.

The study was situated within a critical realist epistemological framework, which acknowledges that although the physiological, organizational, and competitive demands of Formula One constitute an objective reality, athletes' experiences of these demands are shaped by subjective interpretation, social context, and personal meaning-making. This perspective is particularly suited to elite sport psychology, where objective performance demands coexist with highly individualized psychological responses. A critical realist position also accommodates the mediated nature of the dataset: it treats each driver account as a genuine, contextually situated construction of experience, while recognizing that the account itself is filtered through the norms and constraints of media production rather than offering unmediated access to internal psychological states.

Data sources and selection criteria

Data were identified through purposive sampling of publicly available media involving current and former professional Formula One drivers, published between 2018 and 2026. Sources were located through structured searches of official team and championship channels, major sports broadcasters, and video platforms hosting official press-conference and podcast footage. Searches combined each driver's name with terms including "pressure," "resilience," "mental health," "emotions," "identity," and "retirement." The resulting corpus should be understood as a purposively assembled sample of information-rich public accounts rather than as an exhaustive collection of all eligible material published during the sampling window.

Inclusion criteria required sources to be: verified, long-form or acute post-event audio/video transcripts; focused on drivers with current or recent F1 race experience; and containing explicit, first-person accounts of psychological pressure, emotional regulation, adversity, or identity. Brief, promotional, or heavily edited commercial soundbites were excluded to ensure depth and authenticity of qualitative analysis.

Applying these criteria yielded a final dataset of 19 individual transcripts drawn from 14 Formula One and Formula One-related drivers: 13 male drivers and one female driver, Jamie Chadwick. The sample included current and former Formula One competitors as well as drivers whose careers were closely connected to Formula One through development, reserve, academy, or feeder-series roles. It spanned world-championship-level competitors, a rookie in his debut season, recently retired drivers, and drivers who had undergone a publicised mid-career return. The sample was purposive rather than exhaustive or representative: sources were retained when they offered detailed, first-person reflection on pressure, emotion, or identity. This approach concentrated the dataset among high-profile, frequently interviewed drivers whose media access and disclosure opportunities differ from those of less prominent competitors, including most junior and emerging drivers. The implications of this sampling strategy for the transferability of the findings are addressed in the Strengths and limitations section.

Sample adequacy was evaluated using the concept of information power (Malterud et al., 2016) rather than numerical saturation, given the purposive and non-representative nature of the dataset. The specificity of the sample, its alignment with the research question, and the depth of the selected accounts were judged sufficient for the interpretive claims advanced here, although coverage across the wider driver population remained limited. Table 1 reports the number of quoted or coded extracts attributed to each driver within each final theme. These counts are descriptive indicators of representation within the reported analysis; they are not measures of thematic importance, prevalence, or analytic weight.

Table 1. Number of coded extracts attributed to each driver across the four final themes.

Driver	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Total
Norris	2	–	–	–	2
Leclerc	1	–	–	–	1
Russell	1	–	–	–	1
Chadwick	1	–	–	–	1
Piastri	–	2	–	–	2
Verstappen	–	1	–	1	2
Sainz	–	1	–	–	1
Ricciardo	–	–	2	–	2
Hamilton	–	–	1	1	2
Vettel	–	–	1	–	1
Fernando	–	–	1	–	1
Webber	–	–	1	–	1
Correa	–	–	–	1	1
Antonelli	–	–	–	1	1

Data analysis

Data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2019) six-phase Reflexive Thematic Analysis, adapted for a secondary media dataset as described above. All transcripts were compiled into a single dataset (Table 1) and managed manually by a single researcher; audio and video sources were transcribed verbatim, and existing written transcripts were checked against the original recording or publication for accuracy prior to

 © 2027 ARD Asociación Española

coding. The researcher first repeatedly read and re-read all materials to develop familiarity with the dataset, recording preliminary observations relating to performance pressure, emotional regulation, resilience, confidence, adversity, and identity. Data were then coded inductively at the semantic and latent levels to identify psychologically meaningful features, with coding informed by, but not confined to, existing literature on resilience, emotional regulation, athletic identity, and stress appraisal.

Related codes were subsequently clustered into candidate themes representing shared psychological processes across drivers' accounts. Candidate themes were iteratively reviewed against the complete dataset and refined through a process of collapsing, splitting, and re-labelling to ensure internal coherence, distinctiveness from other themes, and clear connection to the coded data. Because the dataset was analysed by a single researcher, this iterative review served as the primary internal check on interpretation, alongside the strategies described under Trustworthiness below; no second coder or inter-rater agreement process was used, consistent with RTA's positioning of theme generation as an interpretive rather than purely procedural task. Final themes were named, defined, and related back to contemporary sport psychology literature to produce an interpretive account of psychological adaptation in elite motorsport.

The analysis generated four overarching themes: perfectionism and self-criticism; emotional regulation and functional appraisal; identity reconstruction and career adaptation; and adversity, cognitive control, and mental toughness. The distribution of coded extracts across drivers and themes is reported in Table 1, enabling readers to assess whether particular themes draw broadly across the dataset or depend heavily on the accounts of a small number of drivers.

Researcher reflexivity

Consistent with Braun and Clarke's reflexive approach, the researcher acknowledges an active role in theme generation, shaped by prior training in psychology, familiarity with sport psychology theory, and an existing interest in Formula One as a competitive domain. This familiarity provided useful contextual knowledge for interpreting drivers' accounts but also carried a risk of over-identifying with existing theoretical frameworks (e.g., Gross's process model, Athletic Identity Theory) when coding, potentially leading data to be read these frameworks rather than allowed to challenge or extend them. To manage this risk, the researcher used analytic memos to record instances where a code or candidate theme appeared to be driven more by theoretical expectation than by the data itself and revisited these instances during theme review. Themes were treated throughout as interpretive constructions co-produced by the researcher and the dataset, rather than as objective discoveries existing independently of the analytic process.

Trustworthiness

Several strategies were used to support the quality and transparency of the analysis, following current guidance on evaluating RTA rather than criteria (e.g., inter-rater reliability, saturation) developed for other qualitative traditions. Reflexive memoing was used throughout coding to document and critically examine analytic decisions, including the researcher-positioning risks noted above. Multi-contextual comparison was used by examining driver narratives across different media settings, including press conferences, post-race interviews, and long-form podcasts, which helped distinguish patterns recurring across contexts from responses that appeared specific to a single, more tightly managed setting (e.g., an official press conference) versus a less formal one (e.g., a podcast). Findings were also interpreted against established frameworks of resilience, emotional regulation, and athletic identity, both to situate themes within existing theory and to identify points where the dataset extended or sat in tension with that theory. A full audit trail of codes, candidate themes, and analytic memos was retained and is available on request, consistent with recommended practice for transparency in RTA.

Ethical considerations

This study used only secondary data already in the public domain and did not involve recruitment, contact, or interaction with any driver; as such, it did not require review by an institutional research ethics committee under the policy on secondary analysis of public-domain material and was conducted in accordance with that policy. Because drivers did not consent to participate in this specific study, they are treated throughout as public commentators on their own experience rather than as research participants, and no claims are made about their private psychological states beyond what they themselves disclosed publicly. Direct quotations are reproduced under fair-use provisions for scholarly commentary and criticism, are limited to what is necessary to support the analysis and are fully attributed to their original source in the reference list and Table 1. The analysis focused on understanding publicly communicated experiences rather than diagnosing, evaluating, or making clinical claims about any individual driver's mental health. Care was taken to interpret narratives within their original context, to avoid unsupported psychological inferences beyond what drivers themselves stated, and to represent drivers' accounts in ways that do not misrepresent or sensationalize the original source material.

RESULTS

Theme 1: Perfectionism, self-criticism, and the burden of performance

A prominent theme across the dataset concerned the pervasive influence of perfectionism as both a facilitator of elite performance and a source of psychological vulnerability. Drivers consistently described exceptionally high personal standards that extended beyond the pursuit of competitive success, shaping how they interpreted mistakes, evaluated their performances, and constructed their sense of competence. Rather than attributing pressure primarily to external expectations, many narratives revealed that the most significant demands were internally generated, with performance errors frequently experienced as reflections of personal inadequacy rather than isolated competitive setbacks. Throughout this theme, driver statements are presented first and researcher interpretation is offered separately, to keep visible the distinction between what drivers reported and how those reports are read psychologically.

Lando Norris provided one of the clearest illustrations of this process, describing pressure as arising from his own pursuit of flawless performance rather than from external scrutiny. Reflecting on his approach to racing, he stated, *"I perform well when I'm having fun and I'm relaxed... I just put too much pressure on myself because I want to do well. I want to be pole, I want to win, I want to be perfect"* (Formula 1, 2025b). His subsequent acknowledgement that *"I need to accept a little bit more that I'm not going to be perfect and I'm making mistakes because I'm trying to be perfect rather than the other way round"* (Formula 1, 2025a, para. 7) points to an awareness, in his own words, of the tension between striving for perfection and accepting error. Read alongside broader perfectionism literature, this pattern is consistent with the possibility that perfectionistic striving intensifies self-monitoring under pressure; however, this is an interpretation offered by the researcher rather than a claim made by Norris himself, whose account describes the pressure and its cost in performance terms rather than in terms of monitoring or cognitive interference.

This pattern extended beyond Norris and emerged across multiple driver narratives. Charles Leclerc repeatedly assumed personal responsibility for disappointing outcomes, even when broader operational factors contributed to performance. Following a qualifying session, he remarked, *"Horrible. Nothing really to say, I think the pace was there for the front row but I eventually didn't do the job when I needed to"* (Formula 1, 2025c). This statement is consistent with a tendency to internalize responsibility for outcomes even where external factors may have contributed though a single quotation cannot establish this as a stable pattern in Leclerc's self-evaluation more broadly. Similarly, George Russell's reflections revealed an intense

 © 2027 ARD Asociación Española

commitment to post-performance evaluation; he recently stated, *"My whole focus for the last 36 hours has been on straight-line speed. It hasn't been focused on the set-up, the tyres or anything, because we're all trying to solve what is going on. And even my last lap, for some reason, I lost another 0.15secs to myself, just on the straight"* (Benson, 2026). His account is framed around diagnosing a technical problem rather than assigning personal blame; the granular, self-directed scrutiny in this account is nonetheless consistent with the broader pattern of intense self-evaluation described by other drivers in this theme, in a sport where marginal performance differences can determine competitive outcomes.

The psychological consequences of perfectionistic striving were not confined to cognitive processes but were also expressed physiologically. Norris described experiencing profound pre-race nervousness that disrupted fundamental preparatory behaviours, explaining, *"There's always pressure. I still get so nervous before qualifying, before the races... I barely eat anything on Sundays, I struggle to drink anything on Sundays, just because I'm nervous and because of the pressure"* (Formula 1, 2025a). Because Norris directly describes both the nervousness and its physical effects, this account offers more direct evidence of embodied pressure than the earlier examples, illustrating how internally generated expectations can become embodied in behaviours essential to optimal performance within an already physically demanding sporting environment.

Not all pressure described in the dataset was self-generated in the way Norris, Leclerc, and Russell described. For drivers positioned as representatives of a wider group rather than only of themselves, an additional, externally anchored form of pressure emerged. Jamie Chadwick, a Williams development driver and three-time W Series champion who has since progressed through Formula 3, Formula 2, and IndyCar-affiliated machinery on her route toward Formula One, described feeling that a poor personal performance would reflect on the series and the wider population of female drivers she was seen to represent, stating that she felt the pressure of this representative role *"quite strongly"* (Telegraph Sport, 2021). This account extends the theme beyond individually generated perfectionism: for drivers from groups still establishing a foothold in elite motorsport, performance pressure can be compounded by an awareness that personal setbacks may be read as evidence about the group as a whole, adding a socially anchored layer to the internally generated perfectionism described elsewhere in this theme. This finding should be read as specific to Chadwick's account as the dataset's sole female driver, rather than generalized to women in motorsport as a whole.

Despite these challenges, the narratives also revealed evidence of psychological adaptation. Several drivers acknowledged the importance of accepting imperfection, developing emotional awareness, and seeking psychological support as integral components of elite performance. Norris's willingness to discuss working with a sport psychologist reflects a broader cultural shift within Formula One, where psychological support is increasingly viewed as a performance resource rather than a sign of weakness.

While exceptionally high standards appear fundamental to sustaining world-class performance, excessive self-criticism may heighten vulnerability to anxiety, emotional exhaustion, and reduced psychological well-being. It should be noted that the drivers featured in this theme were, at the time of the statements analysed, all established or rising competitors at similar career stages; whether perfectionism is narrated differently by drivers earlier or later in their careers is addressed in Theme 3. The narratives therefore distinguish adaptive striving for excellence from maladaptive self-evaluation, highlighting the importance of emotional regulation and self-compassion in maintaining both performance and long-term psychological resilience.

Theme 2: Emotional regulation and functional appraisal under pressure

A second theme centred on the role of emotional regulation in maintaining performance under the sustained pressures of Formula One. Across the dataset, drivers consistently described emotions not as experiences

to be suppressed but as psychological states requiring deliberate regulation to preserve cognitive clarity, attentional control, and effective decision-making. Rather than eliminating emotional responses, drivers' accounts emphasized managing their functional value, suggesting that successful adaptation depended on regulating the influence of emotions rather than their presence. This pattern reflects a process of functional appraisal, whereby emotions are evaluated according to their usefulness for performance and adjusted accordingly. As in Theme 1, driver statements are reported first, with researcher interpretation of their psychological significance offered separately and explicitly flagged as interpretation.

Oscar Piastri's narratives most clearly exemplified this perspective. Rejecting the perception that his composed demeanour reflected emotional detachment, he explained*, "I have emotions, I still feel everything that everyone else feels. It's just that, being blunt, I think a lot of emotions are not that helpful"* (Richards, 2025). Rather than indicating emotional suppression, this account suggests a conscious process of evaluating emotional experiences according to their relevance for performance. Similarly, reflecting on competitive outcomes, Piastri stated*, "I don't think there's any point dwelling on anything longer than you have to. It's important sometimes to get that frustration out, to celebrate, to do whatever, but just because you won last weekend or just because you lost last weekend doesn't mean that the same thing is going to happen this weekend"* (Richards, 2025). In Piastri's own words, this reflects a deliberate choice not to let recent results affect the present. Read alongside cognitive reappraisal models of emotional regulation, this pattern is consistent with though not direct evidence of the reappraisal process described in that literature; the interpretation of these statements as "reappraisal" in a technical sense is the researcher's, not a term Piastri himself used.

Comparable patterns emerged across the broader dataset. Max Verstappen frequently described setbacks in pragmatic rather than emotional terms, directing attention towards identifying practical solutions instead of engaging in prolonged rumination. He stated, *"I was unhappy but the team is also unhappy. Everybody was trying their best to achieve better reliability but there's no quick fix. Something new was breaking down every time. We still managed to turn things around very positively..."* (McRae, 2018). In this account, Verstappen frames a sustained mechanical setback in operational terms locating the problem in the car rather than in himself and reports a positive outcome without describing distress along the way. This is consistent with an interpretation of adversity as an operational challenge rather than a threat to competence; however, the single quotation available does not itself establish how quickly or completely any internal recovery occurred, and that claim is not made here.

Similarly, Carlos Sainz approached competitive difficulties through analytical, forward-looking language rather than emotionally expressive language. He said, *"I just need to make sure now we start doing less mistakes when it comes to executing the weekend and keep improving my speed... We are not as far as it seems – we just need to put a full weekend together and it will come"* (Formula 1, 2025d). This focus on specific, controllable actions mistakes, execution, speed rather than on the setback itself is consistent with what emotional-regulation literature describes as a problem-focused appraisal style; framed this way, it may help preserve attentional resources for future competition, though this functional benefit is inferred by the researcher rather than stated by Sainz.

Collectively, these findings indicate that emotional regulation is a recurring feature of how drivers publicly narrate psychological adaptation within elite motorsport. Across drivers, these accounts were characterised by acknowledging emotional experiences while describing their disruptive influence on cognition and behaviour as something to be limited. Through language consistent with cognitive reappraisal, problem-focused appraisal, and sustained attention to controllable aspects of performance, drivers' public accounts

 © 2027 ARD Asociación Española

describe preserving psychological resources for consistent performance in one of the most demanding environments in elite sport. Rather than reflecting emotional suppression, these narratives suggest that, as publicly presented, resilience in Formula One is described by drivers as underpinned by the capacity to regulate emotional responses an account of how drivers characterize their own adaptation, rather than direct evidence of the underlying regulatory processes themselves. As in Theme 1, the drivers featured here (Piastri, Verstappen, Sainz) were, at the time of these statements, established top-tier competitors; career-stage variation in how emotional regulation is narrated is addressed in Theme 3.

Theme 3: Identity disruption and narrative reconstruction

A third theme captured the dynamic nature of athletic identity in Formula One, illustrating how periods of adversity, performance decline, career transition, and changing personal priorities challenged drivers' established sense of self. Across the dataset, identity emerged not as a fixed characteristic but as a continually negotiated construct shaped by competitive experiences and personal meaning-making. The narratives suggested that psychological adaptation extended beyond recovering performance; it required reconstructing self-worth in response to changing professional and personal circumstances. Drivers who successfully navigated these disruptions often demonstrated greater flexibility in how they understood themselves, broadening their identity beyond competitive achievement alone. This theme draws on drivers at markedly different career stages a driver navigating a mid-career comeback, an established champion adjusting to a decline in competitiveness, a veteran emphasizing longevity, and two drivers narrating retirement allowing the developmental variation in identity reconstruction noted in Themes 1 and 2 to be examined directly here.

Daniel Ricciardo's experiences provided one of the clearest illustrations of identity disruption. Following prolonged difficulties adapting to the McLaren car, he reflected, *"It was something I couldn't really grasp... I'd never experienced it before. I'd always been able to drive instinctively, and suddenly I couldn't"* (Formula 1, 2022). Although framed by Ricciardo in technical terms, this account is consistent with though does not itself state a deeper psychological struggle in which declining performance challenged his sense of competence; this reading is the researcher's interpretation of an account that Ricciardo himself describes primarily as a loss of instinctive feel for the car. Within the highly visible environment of Formula One, where performance is continuously evaluated by teams, media, and fans, technical difficulties of this kind may plausibly extend into broader questions of professional identity. Ricciardo's eventual victory at Monza therefore represented more than a return to competitive success. His declaration, *"For anyone who thought I left... I never left. Just moved aside for a while"* (Formula 1, 2024b), can be interpreted as a narrative reconstruction of identity, reaffirming his place within the sport after a prolonged period of self-doubt and public scrutiny.

Comparable processes of identity reconstruction were evident in Lewis Hamilton's narratives following the controversial conclusion of the 2021 World Championship. At his first public appearance after the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, Hamilton reflected*, 'there was a moment where I lost a little bit of faith within the system,'* but stated*, 'I'd like to think that whilst moments like this define other's careers, I refuse to let this define mine... I'm focused on being the best I can be and coming back stronger'* (Sky Sports, 2022). In Hamilton's own account, this reconstruction centres explicitly on refusing to let a single contested result define his career, distinguishing his response from Ricciardo's account of regaining lost instinctive feel, or Vettel's and Webber's accounts of redirecting identity beyond the sport entirely.

Discussing his new multi-year Aston Martin deal at age 42, Alonso said, “I will be the first one to raise my hand and say I have maybe lost here or there and we will find solutions... I don’t see that coming for the next few years.” He also described his decision to keep racing as something that required him to “really speak

with myself" about whether he was still willing to commit, adding, "I'm ready to sacrifice a few more years of my life on normal things, but I'm happy to keep travelling... I feel motivated" (Formula 1, 2024a).

Reflecting on what he wanted to be remembered for, Hamilton said, *"The question has always been asked: 'What do I want my legacy to be?'... When I was younger, it was to be regarded as one of the best F1 drivers, but over time I have had the success, and the joy that brings is always short-lived."* He continued, *"I would like to be remembered for much more than winning championships, which is an amazing thing on its own, but for actually helping people and changing the industry and the viewpoints"* (Black History Month UK, 2021).

Likewise, Sebastian Vettel's retirement narratives reflected a deliberate expansion of identity beyond Formula One. Rather than portraying retirement as the loss of purpose, Vettel discussed family life, environmental advocacy, and personal values as meaningful extensions of his identity beyond elite sport. He stated, *"The time feels right to do other things... obviously a big part focusing on family life but also discover new sides or new elements about me and the interests that I have and give them more space and more time and more room to explore really"* (Davies & Morse, 2022). In Vettel's own account, retirement is framed as an expansion of focus rather than a loss, though whether this reflects an underlying psychological process of identity broadening, or a publicly appropriate way of characterizing retirement, cannot be determined from this statement alone.

Mark Webber similarly acknowledged the challenges associated with leaving a profession that had structured much of his adult life, highlighting the importance of developing interests and relationships outside competition to facilitate a healthy transition from elite sport. He said*, "I want a different balance in my life and the timing is right... I want to spend more time with my family, my partner, my friends. Suddenly there are things on the radar that weren't there before,"* and *"over the past year the urge went away. So I had to ask myself why... You have to find a balance, something that stimulates you and I've found that with Porsche"* (GMM, 2013).

Taken together, these accounts suggest that identity reconstruction is narrated differently depending on career stage and circumstance: Ricciardo's comeback account centres on regaining trust in a lost skill; Hamilton's account (during a period of declining results without retirement) centres on broadening the sources of his self-worth; and Vettel's and Webber's retirement accounts centre on redirecting identity toward life outside the sport entirely. This suggests that "identity reconstruction" is not a single uniform process but takes different narrative forms depending on whether a driver is recovering within the sport, adjusting to decline within the sport, or exiting it altogether.

Viewed through the lens of Athletic Identity Theory, these narratives are consistent with the idea that strong athletic identification can simultaneously promote elite performance and increase susceptibility to psychological distress when performance declines or careers change, though the dataset provides evidence of how drivers publicly discuss this pattern rather than direct evidence of the underlying psychological process. The findings suggest that, as publicly narrated, resilience is presented not as reliant on weakening athletic identity but on developing a more flexible and multidimensional sense of self. Identity reconstruction therefore emerged as a central feature of how drivers publicly account for psychological adaptation in Formula One, describing how they maintain continuity, purpose, and well-being despite the uncertainties inherent in elite motorsport.

 © 2027 ARD Asociación Española

Theme 4: Cognitive control and adaptive responses to adversity

The final theme explored the diverse psychological processes through which drivers adapted to adversity while maintaining performance in the highly demanding environment of Formula One. Across the dataset, resilience was not reflected in the absence of stress or vulnerability but in the ability to sustain goal-directed behaviour despite competitive uncertainty, public scrutiny, and repeated setbacks. Although drivers differed in how they responded to adversity, their narratives consistently highlighted cognitive control, adaptive appraisal, and meaning-making as central features of how resilience was publicly described. This theme draws on drivers spanning a wide range of career stages and circumstances an established, highly experienced champion, a driver recovering from career-threatening injury, and a rookie in his debut season allowing the developmental comparison flagged in earlier themes to be examined most directly here.

One pattern was characterised by automaticity and emotional neutrality. Max Verstappen consistently described competitive pressure as an ordinary aspect of elite racing rather than an exceptional psychological burden. His observation *that "Stress is very bad for you, and you're gonna die sooner if you have a lot of stress, so I'm gonna be 250 years old"* (Red Bull Racing, 2025), although delivered humorously, is consistent with a broader tendency to normalize rather than dramatize pressure. A single humorous remark cannot establish the presence of automated performance routines or adaptive cognitive appraisal in any technical sense; what it does suggest, more modestly, is that Verstappen publicly frames stress as something to be dismissed rather than dwelt on.

In contrast, other drivers demonstrated resilience through reflective adaptation and sustained engagement with adversity. Lewis Hamilton openly discussed experiences of self-doubt and emotional struggle during a prolonged period of reduced competitiveness. Following his victory at the 2024 British Grand Prix after an extended winless period, he reflected, *"There's been so many moments where I didn't think that I was good enough or that I was able to do what I did today ever again,"* and, *"We live in a time when mental health is such a serious issue and I am not going to lie (and deny) that I have experienced that"* (Benson, 2024). Rather than denying vulnerability, Hamilton's own account frames his resilience as involving persistence and emotional acceptance despite ongoing self-doubt, in his own terms rather than a clinical framework imposed by the researcher.

The narratives also included resilience narrated in the context of profound adversity. Juan Manuel Correa's reflections following the fatal 2019 Spa-Francorchamps accident represent one of the most significant examples within the dataset. Despite sustaining life-threatening injuries, undergoing multiple reconstructive surgeries, and grieving the loss of fellow driver Anthoine Hubert, Correa consistently described returning to racing as the central objective that sustained his recovery. Reflecting on this period, he explained, *"I needed a sort of almost impossible challenge because I knew it was going to be long and it was going to be hard... So having that really crazy goal of racing again, which most people didn't think was possible, gave me motivation to push through the recovery"* (DIVEBOMB, 2024). In Correa's own account, the pursuit of an ambitious, near-impossible goal is framed as central to his recovery. This is consistent with the broader idea that meaning-making can support adaptation after severe adversity; however, this single account cannot establish that mechanism as generalizable, and the interpretation offered here is the researcher's reading of one driver's account of an extraordinary and highly personal experience.

A related but developmentally distinct pattern emerged among rookie drivers entering Formula One for the first time. Andrea Kimi Antonelli, promoted to Mercedes for the 2025 season at 18 years old, described a mid-season collapse in form during which he felt the pressure had, in his words, let the situation *"kind of destroy me,"* because he felt he was letting down the people who had backed him, particularly the team

principal who had championed his promotion (Formula 1, 2026). Beyond this direct statement, the available source provides limited first-person detail on the process of recovery; the characterisation of a "gradual erosion of confidence" followed by "a team-led intervention and a self-directed reset" reflects the researcher's reading of the broader interview rather than Antonelli's own description in those terms and is offered here as an interpretation to be treated with appropriate caution given the brevity of the underlying quotation. He later described the experience as one that taught him a great deal about himself and about responding to difficult moments (Formula 1, 2026). Considered alongside Hamilton's and Correa's accounts, Antonelli's narrative suggests that adversity-driven adaptation is not confined to established champions recovering from career-defining setbacks or to survivors of catastrophic events, but is also narrated at the earliest, most vulnerable stage of a driver's career though, consistent with the pattern across this manuscript, each of these accounts should be read as how these drivers publicly characterised adversity, rather than as direct evidence of the psychological processes involved.

Collectively, these findings suggest that, as publicly narrated, mental toughness and resilience in Formula One are not presented as a singular personality trait or uniform coping style. Instead, drivers' public accounts described diverse strategies, including automatic performance execution, reflective persistence, structured problem-solving, and meaning-making following adversity. Despite these individual differences, drivers' accounts of successful adaptation consistently emphasized maintaining cognitive control, focusing on controllable aspects of performance, and constructing meaningful responses to challenge.

DISCUSSION

This study explored how elite motorsport athletes publicly construct and communicate experiences of performance pressure, emotional regulation, resilience, and athletic identity within Formula One. Through reflexive thematic analysis, four interconnected themes emerged: perfectionism and self-criticism, emotional regulation and functional appraisal, identity disruption and reconstruction, and adaptive responses to adversity. Collectively, the findings suggest that, as publicly narrated, psychological adaptation in Formula One is not presented as underpinned by a single form of mental toughness but by the interaction of cognitive, emotional, and identity-related processes drivers describe as enabling them to sustain performance in an exceptionally demanding competitive environment.

Theoretical contribution

The central theoretical claim of this study, introduced at the outset, is that resilience narratives produced by Formula One drivers serve a dual function: they may reflect drivers' own self-regulatory processes, while simultaneously operating as public impression management shaped by media training, sponsor expectations, and audience reception. This distinguishes the present findings from models such as Fletcher and Sarkar's (2012) grounded theory of resilience, Brewer and Cornelius's (2001) Athletic Identity Measurement Scale, both developed primarily from privately disclosed, researcher-elicited accounts, where the account's only audience is the researcher. The accounts analysed here are, by contrast, produced for a public audience under conditions of active media management. Across the dataset, drivers did not simply describe resilience or identity processes; their accounts appeared to actively negotiate between disclosing genuine vulnerability and maintaining a media-appropriate, competitively advantageous public identity. In the Perfectionism and Self-Blame theme, for example, self-critical statements were frequently paired within the same response with a reframing that positioned the driver as accountable and in control, consistent with impression management as much as with cognitive appraisal. Similarly, in Narrative Identity and Career Reconstruction, drivers' accounts of setbacks and comebacks closely mirrored the structure of the media "comeback narrative" already circulating about them, raising the question of whether identity reconstruction here a purely internal

 © 2027 ARD Asociación Española

psychological process is or one partly co-constructed with, and constrained by, the surrounding media narrative. This suggests that existing resilience and identity models, built largely around privately disclosed experience, may need extension to account for the dual, self-regulatory and audience-facing, function that resilience narratives can serve when produced for public consumption. This is offered as a boundary condition for existing models rather than a wholesale challenge to them and is a claim that direct primary research (see Future Directions) could test explicitly.

This dynamic is unlikely to be unique to Formula One. Elite athletes performing under sustained media visibility have been shown to adopt impression-management strategies that frame their public accounts around competence and control, at times at the expense of disclosing psychological vulnerability (Åkesdotter et al., 2024). Similarly, athletes' initial public disclosures of mental health struggles are themselves constructed narratives, shaped by the demands of speaking to a public "over-hearing audience" rather than a private confidant (Elsey et al., 2023). Formula One offers a concentrated case of this broader phenomenon given its combination of individual visibility, near-constant media access, and commercial exposure, but the theoretical contribution proposed here that resilience narratives can serve dual adaptive and presentational functions may extend to other public-facing performance contexts and is offered as a direction for comparison in future work.

The findings also engage with contemporary conceptualizations of resilience as a dynamic process rather than a stable trait (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012). As publicly narrated, drivers' accounts described diverse pathways to resilience, reflecting differences in how they characterized cognitive appraisal, emotional regulation, and personal meaning-making. While some accounts emphasized automaticity and rapid recovery following setbacks, others emphasized persistence, vulnerability, and the reconstruction of purpose after prolonged adversity consistent with the idea that successful adaptation, as described by drivers themselves, does not depend on a uniform psychological profile but on flexibility in responding to changing competitive demands.

A central finding concerned the role of emotional regulation in how drivers described maintaining performance under sustained pressure. Across the narratives, drivers consistently described regulating emotions by focusing attention on controllable aspects of performance and limiting emotional carryover between competitive events. Rather than describing emotional suppression, drivers frequently reframed setbacks in their public accounts as opportunities for learning and adaptation. These accounts are consistent with Gross's Process Model of Emotion Regulation, suggesting that language consistent with cognitive reappraisal recurs in how drivers publicly discuss attentional control, recovery, and sustained performance in high-pressure environments.

The study also extends understanding of how athletic identity is publicly discussed in elite motorsport. Strong identification with the athlete role appeared, in drivers' accounts, to accompany both commitment and high performance, as well as vulnerability during periods of underperformance, injury, technical difficulties, and career transition. Drivers who described broader sources of meaning including family, mentorship, advocacy, and personal values presented themselves as better equipped to navigate these challenges. These accounts are consistent with multidimensional perspectives of athletic identity, suggesting that identity diversification may be protective, though this remains an interpretation of self-presented narratives rather than a demonstrated psychological outcome.

Mental health considerations

These findings sit alongside ongoing discussions of burnout, psychological safety, and athlete well-being in elite sport. It is worth considering that the same narrative features that made drivers' accounts read as adaptive reframing setbacks, emphasizing control, normalizing pressure may also function to present vulnerability in a publicly palatable form, potentially alongside distress that is not fully disclosed. For instance, Hamilton's and Antonelli's accounts of self-doubt were shared only after periods of visible struggle had already ended in recovery or renewed success; it is not possible to determine from these accounts what, if anything, was experienced but not disclosed during the struggle itself. This raises a tension worth naming explicitly: narratives that read as psychologically adaptive in public may coexist with, rather than rule out, underlying vulnerability that public accounts are not well positioned to capture.

Practical implications

The findings have several implications for applied sport psychology within elite motorsport specifically, beyond generic recommendations already established in the broader sport psychology literature. First, given the finding that public resilience narratives may serve both self-regulatory and impression-management functions, media-facing communications training for drivers could be paired explicitly with private psychological support, so that drivers have space to process setbacks outside of the public-facing narratives they are expected to produce for media, sponsors, and fans.

Second, identity-development programmes for junior and development-level drivers such as those in Formula 2, Formula 3, and academy systems could be introduced earlier than they typically are, given that identity narratives in this dataset (e.g., Antonelli's account) suggest that pressure on a narrow, performance-dependent identity can emerge as early as a driver's debut season, not only at the elite, established-champion stage.

Third, given the recurring theme of setbacks tied to contractual uncertainty and career transitions (e.g., Ricciardo's comeback, Vettel's and Webber's retirement accounts), teams and driver-management structures could build structured psychological support specifically around these transition points comeback seasons, contract renewal periods, and retirement rather than offering only general, ongoing access to a sport psychologist.

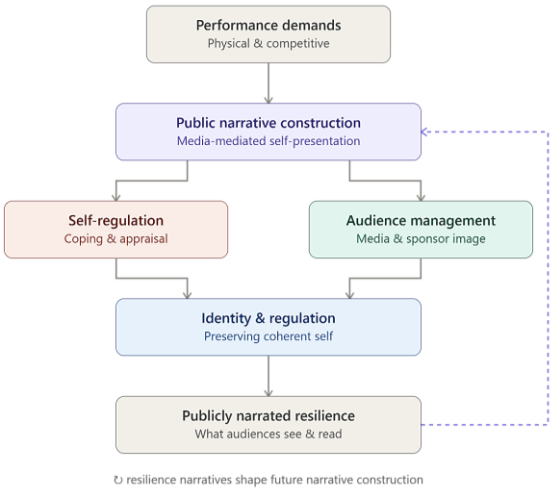


Figure 1. Conceptual model of publicly constructed resilience in elite motorsport, showing the dual self-regulatory and audience-facing function of resilience narratives.

 © 2027 ARD Asociación Española

Strengths and limitations

A major strength of this study is its examination of publicly available narratives from drivers representing diverse career stages and competitive experiences, providing insight into a population that remains underrepresented within qualitative sport psychology research. Reflexive thematic analysis enabled an in-depth exploration of how psychological adaptation is publicly communicated, complementing existing quantitative literature.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. The study relied exclusively on publicly available narratives, which may have been shaped by media training or impression management; this is treated throughout as a central feature of the dataset rather than solely a limitation, but it does mean the findings speak to public narrative construction rather than to underlying psychological states directly. The use of secondary data also precluded opportunities for follow-up questioning and member checking. The sample includes one female driver's account (Chadwick) alongside 13 male drivers' accounts and remains concentrated among current or former world-championship-level and highly publicised competitors; drivers with less media access, including most junior and development-level drivers, are correspondingly underrepresented. As such, the findings should be read as reflecting the narratives of male Formula One drivers predominantly and should not be assumed to transfer fully to women, junior categories, endurance racing, or other motorsport disciplines without further research. Furthermore, the analysis focused primarily on English-language sources and therefore may not fully capture the experiences of drivers from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds. As with all qualitative research, the findings should be interpreted as context-specific rather than universally representative of all Formula One drivers.

Future directions

Future research should examine psychological adaptation through direct qualitative interviews with current and former drivers, enabling deeper exploration of experiences that may not emerge within public media contexts, and allowing direct comparison between privately disclosed and publicly presented accounts of resilience and identity in order to establish the extent to which publicly narrated resilience reflects, diverges from, or is a strategic extension of privately experienced psychological processes, testing the boundary condition proposed above. Longitudinal research could further examine how resilience, emotional regulation, and athletic identity evolve across different career stages. Expanding research to include more junior and development-level drivers, additional female competitors across motorsport categories, engineers, and other members of Formula One teams would also provide a broader understanding of the psychological demands associated with elite motorsport. Future work could also examine whether the dual, self-regulatory and audience-facing function of resilience narratives observed here extends to other public-facing elite performance contexts, such as celebrity athletes in other sports or public figures operating under comparable media scrutiny.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how elite motorsport athletes publicly construct experiences of performance pressure, emotional regulation, resilience, and athletic identity within Formula One. The findings suggest that, as publicly narrated, psychological adaptation is not presented as determined by a single characteristic such as mental toughness but as emerging through the interaction of perfectionistic striving, emotional regulation, identity flexibility, and adaptive cognitive control. Drivers' public accounts described diverse strategies for managing adversity, ranging from cognitive reappraisal and structured problem-solving to meaning-making and identity reconstruction following setbacks.

These findings challenge simplified conceptualisations of resilience as an inherent trait and instead support understanding publicly narrated resilience as a dynamic process shaped by personal experience, cognitive appraisal, social context, and the demands of public self-presentation. They further highlight the importance of integrating psychological skills training, identity development, and mental health support within high-performance motorsport environments support that takes into account the distinct pressures of narrating resilience for a public audience.

By providing one of the first qualitative syntheses of elite driver narratives, and by proposing publicly constructed resilience as a boundary condition for existing models, this study contributes to the growing literature on psychological functioning in motorsport and offers a framework for understanding how athletes narrate the sustaining of both performance and well-being in one of the world's most demanding sporting environments.

FUNDING

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this manuscript.

AI USE DISCLOSURE

In accordance with current publishing ethics and transparency recommendations, artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used solely to assist with translation and language editing, with the aim of improving clarity and readability. No AI tools were used in the generation of scientific content, including the study design, data collection, analysis, interpretation of results, or the formulation of conclusions. The author retains full responsibility for the content of the manuscript and confirms its originality, integrity, and accuracy.

REFERENCES

Åkesdotter, C., Kenttä, G., & Sparkes, A. C. (2024). Elite athletes seeking psychiatric treatment: Stigma, impression management strategies, and the dangers of the performance narrative. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, 36*(1), 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/10413200.2023.2185697

Benson, A. (2024, July 7). Lewis Hamilton wins British Grand Prix and says he thought it was never going to happen again. BBC Sport.

Benson, A. (2026, July 18). Russell 'infuriated' by straight-line issue that leaves him 'powerless'. *BBC Sport*. https://www.bbc.com/sport/formula1/articles/clyq6q12dkko

Black History Month UK. (2021, July 13). *Lewis Hamilton says diversity in motorsport would be his most valuable achievement*. https://www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk/article/section/careers/lewis-hamilton-says-diversity-in-motorsport-would-be-most-valuable-achievement/

Brewer, B. W., & Cornelius, A. E. (2001). Norms and factorial invariance of the Athletic Identity Measurement Scale. *Academic Athletic Journal, 15*, 103–113.

Castellucci, F. (2026). Status, uncertainty and performance in Formula One racing. *Sport, Business and Management: An International Journal*, 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1108/SBM-01-2026-0019

 © 2027 ARD Asociación Española

Colangelo, J., Smith, A., Keay, N., Buadze, A., & Liebrenz, M. (2024). Psychiatric risk factors in Formula One and the importance of integrating mental health into driver science. *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living, 6*, Article 1480574. https://doi.org/10.3389/fspor.2024.1480574

Davies, A., & Morse, B. (2022, September 4). Sebastian Vettel believes world needs to 'rethink our behaviors' to tackle climate change. *CNN*. https://edition.cnn.com/2022/09/04/motorsport/sebastian-vettel-climate-change-f1-spt-intl

DIVEBOMB. (2024). JM Correa interview: The pursuit of triumph from tragedy. https://www.dive-bomb.com/article/jm-correa-interview-the-pursuit-of-triumph-from-tragedy

Douzi, W., Dupuy, O., Theurot, D., Smolander, J., & Dugué, B. (2020). Per-cooling (using cooling systems during physical exercise) enhances physical and cognitive performances in hot environments: A narrative review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 17*(3), Article 1031. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17031031

Elsey, C., Winter, P., Litchfield, S. J., Ogweno, S., & Southwood, J. (2023). Professional sport and initial mental health public disclosure narratives. *Communication & Sport, 11*(3), 489–508. https://doi.org/10.1177/2167479520977312

Fletcher, D., & Sarkar, M. (2012). A grounded theory of psychological resilience in Olympic champions. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 13*(5), 669–678. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2012.04.007

Formula 1. (2022, December 20). *'It was something I couldn't really grasp'—Ricciardo pinpoints the main cause of his struggles at McLaren*. https://www.formula1.com/en/latest/article/it-was-something-i-couldnt-really-grasp-ricciardo-pinpoints-the-main-cause.z6Auv8tlPCXg8JHR9S1BY

Formula 1. (2024a, April 11). *Alonso on his new 'lifetime' Aston Martin deal, talks with rival teams and a Honda reunion*. https://www.formula1.com/en/latest/article/alonso-on-his-new-lifetime-aston-martin-deal-talks-with-rival-teams-and-a.1OkvQ3858HUh6cetCLMig9

Formula 1. (2024b, September 27). *From famous quotes to an iconic Secret Santa: The funniest Ricciardo moments that endeared him to F1 fans*. https://www.formula1.com/en/latest/article/from-famous-quotes-to-an-iconic-secret-santa-the-funniest-ricciardo-moments.1Uz5f3yaKBP9krhRI9wB2o

Formula 1. (2025a, April 23). *'I need to chill out'—Norris opens up on early-season mindset as he admits to putting 'too much pressure on myself'*. https://www.formula1.com/en/latest/article/i-need-to-chill-out-norris-opens-up-on-early-season-mindset-as-he-admits-to.3q5GoRxDwLRYtDsgX1pXcA

Formula 1. (2025b, April 22). *Oscar takes charge & Lando talks pressure | 2025 Saudi Arabian GP | F1 Nation podcast* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6o2knMESs_4

Formula 1. (2025c, July 16). *Vasseur explains why Leclerc's self-criticism is both a quality and a fault*. https://www.formula1.com/en/latest/article/vasseur-explains-why-leclercs-self-criticism-is-both-a-quality-and-a-fault.1biWCT76GPcxN5dMHfVm2i

Formula 1. (2025d, April 15). *'We are not as far as it seems'—Sainz reflects on process of adapting to Williams after strongest weekend yet*. https://www.formula1.com/en/latest/article/we-are-not-as-far-as-it-seems-sainz-reflects-on-process-of-adapting-to.3WSJhQ1cRaHz5v411ax6yg

Formula 1. (2026, August 3). *'I let the pressure destroy me'—Antonelli opens up on 2025 struggles and how they made him stronger*. https://www.formula1.com/en/latest/article/i-let-the-pressure-destroy-me-antonelli-opens-up-on-2025-struggles-and-how-they-made-him-stronger.2unpygSUVSbHqMUuMiFu5A

Gezer, H., & Korucuk, M. (2026). Psychological readiness and adaptation to performance stress in female athletes: The mediating role of sport confidence between athletic identity and mental toughness. *BMC Sports Science, Medicine and Rehabilitation, 18*(1), Article 183. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13102-026-01621-z

GMM. (2013, November 5). Motivation to stay fit 'went away'—Webber. Motorsport.com. https://www.motorsport.com/

Gross, J. J. (2014). Emotion regulation: Conceptual and empirical foundations. In J. J. Gross (Ed.), Handbook of emotion regulation (2nd ed., pp. 3–20). Guilford Press.

Gross, J. J., Richards, J. M., & John, O. P. (2006). Emotion regulation in everyday life. In D. K. Snyder, J. A. Simpson, & J. N. Hughes (Eds.), *Emotion regulation in couples and families: Pathways to dysfunction and health* (pp. 13–35). American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/10.1037/11468-001

Lappi, O. (2022). Gaze strategies in driving: An ecological approach. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13*, Article 821440. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.821440

Malterud, K., Siersma, V. D., & Guassora, A. D. (2016). Sample size in qualitative interview studies: Guided by information power. *Qualitative Health Research, 26*(13), 1753–1760. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732315617444

McRae, D. (2018, March 19). Max Verstappen: 'I've never doubted myself. I just drive as fast as I can'. *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2018/mar/19/max-verstappen-ive-never-doubted-myself-drive-fast-f1

Orr, M., Kellison, T., Ross, W. J., Trendafilova, S., Pelcher, J. A., Watanabe, N. M., . . . Rouhas, Z. (2026). Climate risks in motorsport: Setting boundary conditions in Formula 1. European *Sport Management Quarterly*, 26(1), 23–44. https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2025.2503163

Red Bull Racing. (2025). Max Verstappen's end-of-season review [Audio podcast episode]. In *Talking Bull*. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/@redbullracing

Richards, G. (2025, August 29). 'A lot of emotions are not that helpful': Oscar Piastri on his F1 world title dream. *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2025/aug/29/a-lot-of-emotions-are-not-that-helpful-oscar-piastri-on-his-f1-world-title-dream

Sky Sports. (2022, February 19). *Lewis Hamilton on Abu Dhabi: F1 champion 'lost faith' in system but promises 'best' 2022 comeback*. https://www.skysports.com/f1/news/24181/12545149/lewis-hamilton-on-abu-dhabi-f1-champion-lost-faith-in-system-but-promises-best-2022-comeback

Telegraph Sport. (2021, October 27). 'Under-pressure' Chadwick ready for next step on F1 road. *The Daily Telegraph*. https://www.pressreader.com/uk/the-daily-telegraph-sport/20211027/281801402172391

Troy, A. S., Willroth, E. C., Shallcross, A. J., Giuliani, N. R., Gross, J. J., & Mauss, I. B. (2023). Psychological resilience: An affect-regulation framework. *Annual Review of Psychology, 74*, 547–576. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-020122-041854

This work is licensed under a Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 DEED).