Between Struggle and Success

A Cross-Platform Framing Analysis of Vivianne Miedema's Mental Health (2018-2025)

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Master Thesis
June 26 2025

Word Count: 16.275

ABSTRACT

This study explores the differences in mental health framing across diverse media platforms between 2018 and 2025. More specifically, the case study identifies differences in the mental health framing of the Dutch footballer Vivianne Miedema across online news articles, documentaries, social media, and YouTube interviews. While mental health in elite sports has received increasing attention in media coverage, academic research, and public discourse, most of the existing literature remains limited to high profile athletes and crisis moments. This study addresses these gaps by conducting a cross-platform framing analysis of media coverage of Miedema's mental health.

The study is guided by the central research question: How have different types of media framed Vivianne Miedema's mental health struggles between 2018 and 2025? It draws on Entman's (1993) four framing functions (problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation) (p. 52). Further, distinctions between episodic and thematic and generic and issue-specific framing styles are employed. The study applied a mixed data analysis, combining qualitative content and framing analysis with quantitative frequency counts. A total of 48 media units were selected through purposeful and maximum variation sampling. Throughout the analysis, frames were developed inductively and theoretically to ensure analytical rigour and depth. Subsequently, the frames were organised into overarching framing categories. The analysis identified five overarching framing categories: affirmative framing, personal struggle and identity framing, critical and systematic framing, performance-oriented framing, and misrepresentative framing.

The study found significant differences between media types. Affirmative framing emerged as the most dominant category, particularly in online articles and YouTube interviews. Social media platforms commonly employed episodic and generic framing which simplified mental health narratives and emphasised emotional narratives. Contrary, longer formats were more thematic and issue-specific and contextualised her issues within broader structural dynamics.

The analysis revealed that platform-specific conventions influenced the coverage, finding that some representations continue to simplify or individualise complex mental health issues. This study contributed to research on framing, mental health and women's sport by offering a cross-platform perspective. Additionally, the study emphasises the need for more context-sensitive practices in sports media and recommendations on the adjustment of framing theory to media analyses.

KEYWORDS: *Media Framing, Mental Health Awareness, Female Athletes, Social Media Representation, Online News*

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Abstract and Keywords

1. Introduction

1.1 Contextualisation

In recent years, the landscape of athlete mental health has undergone significant changes, marked by increased openness around psychological well-being and challenges in elite sports (Purcell, 2019, p. 1). For a long time, mental health has been a stigmatised and often overlooked aspect of athlete welfare (Gulliver, 2012, p. 2). Recently, this topic has increasingly become a central point in media coverage, academic research, and public discourse (Stevens, 2024, p. 838). This shift has been especially prominent in response to high profile athletes such as Simone Biles, Naomi Osaka, and Michael Phelps. These have candidly spoken about their struggles with mental health (Hapig, 2024, pp. 1-2). Their stories have emphasised the psychological challenges of elite performance while revealing how media coverage plays a crucial role in shaping public perceptions of athlete vulnerability, strength, and identity (Bissell, 2024, pp. 4-5).

Media framing of athlete mental health is particularly relevant in the context of professional football. A sport that has traditionally been tied to stereotypes such as toughness and emotional suppression. These traits may have contributed to the slower emergence of open discussions around mental health. Within women's football, the issue intersects with broader dynamics of gender representation, visibility, and professionalism (Parry, 2023a, pp. 593-595). The year 2018 marked a major turning point with the Women's Super League (WSL), in England becoming fully professional (Barclays WSL, 2023, para. 3). While this professionalisation created new opportunities for players it also brought new uncertainties and pressures such as performance demands, commercial responsibilities, and increased public scrutiny (Culvin, 2021, pp. 684- 688).

Vivianne Miedema is one of the most successful players in women's football, having set the all-time goal record for the Dutch men or women's national team (Olympics, n.d., para. 3). The long-time Arsenal forward has not only been rewarded as a brilliant player but also emerged as one of the few elite women players to speak publicly about mental health issues. She has publicly opened up about mental health issues such as burnout, anxiety, depression, injury- and performance related expectations, and panic attacks (see Appendix A1.1). She thus presents a compelling case for examining these dynamics.

What makes Miedema particularly significant is not only her athletic success but also the timing and manner of her disclosures. Unlike many athletes who speak out during crisis points or post-retirement, Miedema's reflections on mental health have emerged gradually while she continues to compete at the highest level. Her case reflects broader changes in how the media portrays vulnerability and authenticity in athletes. Analysing how various media types, ranging from

traditional journalism to social media, frame her mental health struggles offers unique insights into the differing narratives and representational strategies used across platforms. It highlights how athlete mental health is constructed in the media depending on format, audience, and platform conventions.

1.2 Scientific and Societal Relevance

In recent years, the study of athlete mental health in media discourse has gained increasing scholarly and public interest, largely in response to prominent athletes openly discussing psychological struggles (Everbach et al., 2024, pp. 2, 4-6). These moments have sparked wider conversations about mental health in elite sport and highlighted the complex pressures that athletes face beyond physical performance (Billings, 2023, p. 435). This shift has helped to challenge the societal stigma surrounding mental health and promoted greater awareness of the need for comprehensive athlete welfare. As noted by Rice et al. (2016), there has been a growing recognition of the importance of mental health in elite sports which has led to increased efforts to address stigma and provide better support systems for athletes (pp. 1333-1353).

Moreover, scientific interest has grown over the years. Most of the existing academic literature examines media coverage of crisis moments such as athlete withdrawals from competition (Billings, 2023, pp. 436). Additionally, most studies on media framing of athlete' mental health apply broad concepts, ignoring sports specific dynamics (Stevens et al., 2024, pp. 839, 842, 845). Moreover, there is a lack of studies which distinguish and analyse differences in framing across media formats (López-Rabadán, 2022, pp. 7, 11, 14). Even more scarce is the analysis of female athletes in this historically marginalised domain. Studies such as Parry et al. (2023) observe that broadsheet media are more likely to use empathic and supportive tones (pp. 5-8, 15-16). However, this observation is rarely used to make a clear, frame focused comparison between different media platforms (Stevens et al., 2024, pp. 839, 842, 845).

Moreover, while framing theory has been widely applied especially in political communication and journalism, there remains a significant gap in its application to athlete mental health narratives (Lecheler, 2019, para. 1-2; López-Rabadán, 2022, p. 1; Semetko, 2000, pp. 93-95). Especially, an analysis through Entman's four components through which frames function as well as an examination through episodic/thematic and issue-specific/generic frames remains negligible (p. 52). This study addressed these gaps by conducting a cross platform framing analysis of how Vivianne Miedema's mental health struggles have been framed from 2018 to 2025. By examining media representations across online news articles, YouTube interviews, social media posts, and documentaries, the study offers new insights into how framing varies by media type. This approach

contributes to the academic literature by expanding the scope of athlete mental health research beyond isolated crises and single-platform studies. Moreover, it contributes to a broader societal understanding of how media narratives influence perceptions of mental health in elite sport. This research offers a foundation for more informed and context-sensitive media practices.

1.3 Research Question and Conceptual Clarification

More precisely, this research study focuses on analysing the media coverage of Vivianne Miedema's mental health between 2018 and 2025. Through a comparative analysis, the study seeks to investigate how her struggles are framed across media types. It aims to uncover disparities in the framing and to reveal broader trends on mental health coverage of women's football players. The study strives to reveal potential biases, emphasises, and differences in framing. Consequently, the following research question guides the case analysis:

How have different types of media framed Vivianne Miedema's mental health struggles between 2018 and 2025?

While addressing this question, *framing* is defined as the process of selecting and emphasising certain aspects of mental health in the coverage to guide interpretation and reaction. Frames shape public understanding by structuring complex issues and influencing its perception through implicit and selective emphasis (Chong 2007, pp. 104-106; De Vreese, 2005, p. 53; Entman, 1993, pp. 52-54). *Mental health struggles* refer to both implicit and explicit references to psychological challenges, pressures, or clinical diagnoses discussed by or about Miedema (WHO, 2022, para. 1-3)*. Media types* refer to online news articles, social media posts, YouTube interviews, and documentary content (Dijkstra , 2005, p. 377). This term thus refers to the different media platforms that have been selected and analysed for this study. Alternatively, media types are referred to as (media) platform and formats throughout this study. Further, the study distinguished between *frame category* and *frame style*. Framing category refers to the by the researcher identified core concepts of the media portrayal of mental health (e.g. emphasis on affirmative or performance) (Mui, 2023, p.5). Framing style refers to the narrative approach that is used to deliver these (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Framing styles are distinguished by whether a media unit is presented episodically or thematically and whether it is generic or issue specific (De Vreese, 2005, p. 51; Iyengar, 1991, p. 2).

To address the overarching research question, this study is guided by the following sub-research questions:

1. What framing categories emerge in media portrayals of Vivianne Miedema's mental health struggles?

2. How do these framing categories vary in frequency and distribution across media types?

3. How do different media types construct these frames and how are these constructions shaped by platform-specific convention?

4. How do media types differ in their use of episodic versus thematic framing?

5. Which media types rely more on issue specific versus generic framing?

6. How do episodic/thematic and generic/issue-specific framing styles intersect with the broader framing categories identified in the media coverage?

These sub-questions are grounded in framing theory and serve to guide the analysis of how framing practices vary across media types.

1.4 Methodological Overview

This study employs a mixed approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data analysis to reveal how different media types frame Miedema's mental health. The analysis is carried out as a comparative analysis, combining content analysis and framing analysis across the four proposed media types. The dataset of 48 media units were selected through purposeful and maximum variation sampling across online news articles, social media, YouTube interviews, and documentaries. The sampling period is between 2018 and 2025. Appendix A1.1 entails a complete list of the selected and analysed sources. Framing categories derived inductively and theoretically. To ensure analytical clarity, for a code to be established it had to fulfil at least two of Entman's (1993) four framing functions; problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation (p. 52). Additionally, the units were categorised as episodic/thematic and generic/issue-specific. The study employed a manual coding and organisation process which supported transparency and contextual sensitivity.

1.5 Thesis Outline

To answer the proposed research question and sub-research questions, the study unfolds in four chapters to strategically build a nuanced understanding of how media types shape the framing of athlete mental health, using Miedema as a case study.

Chapter two establishes the theoretical foundation by discussing framing theory and its critical relevance to media and mental health discourses. It provides an overview of the gaps in previous research on athlete mental health in media studies and contextualises the study within this field. Additionally, it discusses dynamics and developments in mental health representations in elite sport and common framing tendencies across media formats.

Chapter three translates the theoretical framework into a mixed-method research design.

The chapter justifies the selection of Miedema as a relevant case to reveal insights into broader trends in media and society through a framing analysis. It provides an overview of the multi-platform data sampling and defines how Entman's four framing functions were operationalised to generate frame labels (p. 52).

Chapter four presents the analytical findings. It identifies five overarching framing categories and highlights how these frames present differently across platforms. Furthermore, it outlines the connection between frame category and frame style. The chapter reveals how these variations contribute to wider narratives around athlete mental health.

The final chapter provides an overview on the findings of platform-specific framing of Miedema's mental health. It reflects on the contribution of the study to the growing body of research on media framing, athlete mental health, and women's sports. It discusses the theoretical implication, addresses limitations, and outlines recommendations on further research into media representations and mental health discourses.

2. Theoretical Framework

In the age of instant news and viral clips, media narratives around mental health can either empower athletes or reinforce stigma. This theoretical framework establishes the foundation for analysing how different types of media have framed Miedema's mental health struggle. The theoretical distinctions directly inform the sub-research questions presented in the introduction and guide the subsequent analysis. This chapter outlines key concepts and distinctions of framing theory, particularly emphasising its role in the sport and mental health discourses. Additionally, the role and differences of traditional news outlets, social media platforms, documentaries, and interviews in relation to the theory are outlined. Despite the existing application of framing theory to sports and mental health discourses, there remains a lack of research analysing how different media types frame mental health in women's football. This makes Vivianne Miedema's case particularly valuable and suitable. By critically evaluating the existing literature this section establishes the theoretical foundation for the subsequent methodological approach and analysis.

2.1 Framing Theory

Framing theory provides insights into how the media construct and allocate a story to shape public perception and interpretation of complex issues (Zaklama, 2025, p. 75). It is the most suited theory to analyse how different media types frame Vivianne Miedema's mental health through processes of selection, emphasis, and interpretation. While other theories such as agenda setting or discourse analysis could also be applied, framing theory offers a clear conceptual structure for examining how meanings are constructed and communicated in media units (Arowolo, 2017, p. 1). Framing theory provides the most relevant conceptual tool for identifying and comparing how media types represent Miedema's experiences in relation to the research aim of the study. This relevance is further expanded on in section 2.2. The following subsection presents a clear analytical lens for this study. It outlines the conceptual foundation, core functions, and key distinctions.

2.1.1 Introduction to Framing Theory

Framing theory, introduced by Erving Goffman (1974) and later expanded by scholars such as Robert Entman (1993), provides a suitable lens for understanding how information is presented in the media to subsequently guide audience interpretation (Arowolo, 2017, p. 2; Entman, 1993, pp. 51-57; Goffman, 1974, p. 11). Goffman conceptualised frames as cognitive structures that help individuals organise their experiences and navigate events and their own role within them (Goffman, 1974, pp. 9-10).

Building on this foundation, Entman (1993) applied the concept of framing to the field of mass communication (pp. 51-57). This shifted the focus from personal interactions and individual

social behaviour to understanding how media shapes public communication. Arowolo (2017, pp. 1-2) offers a helpful synthesis of this development. While Goffman introduced the sociological roots of framing in everyday interactions, Entman established its relevance and application to media studies (Entman, 1993, pp. 51-57). Entman defines framing as the process of selecting certain aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communicative text to promote a specific problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Entman aimed to clarify the central ideas of framing out of previous fragmented studies of framing research. His work continues to serve as a foundational reference in the field (Entman, 1993, pp. 51-55).

In addition, Scheufele (1999) identified framing as a key theory within the broader field of media effects (p. 104). Scheufele proposed a model that distinguishes four distinct stages of framing: frame building, frame setting, individual-level effects, and feedback effects from audiences to journalists (Scheufele, 1999, pp. 114-119). These interconnected stages thus portray framing as a dynamic interaction between media producers, content, and audiences.

2.1.2 Definition and Functions

Entman (1993) defines framing as "selecting some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient" to promote specific interpretations and reactions (p. 52). Frames function through four interrelated components: problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation (Entman, 1993, p. 52). These four components help the audience to understand complex issues by providing them with a structured framework for interpretation (Entman, 1993, p. 52; Scheufele, 1999, p. 107). The first function, problem definition, includes defining what is happening, who is causing it, and what its effects are. Causal interpretation explains the underlying causes of the problem. Moral evaluation involves making moral judgments by evaluating the actions and their outcomes. The fourth function, treatment recommendation, suggests potential solutions, justifying appropriate treatments for the issue, and predicting their potential outcome (Entman, 1993, p. 52).

Chong and Druckman (2007) clarify that framing is not merely about emphasis but about guiding the audience's interpretation (p. 104). They argue that different presentations of the same issue can lead to significantly different public reactions (Chong, 2007, pp. 104-106). This suggests that framing can significantly shape public opinion by emphasising particular aspects of an issue over others.

Frames are often implicit, making them even more influential. As De Vreese (2005) highlights, a frame functions as a central organising idea that helps audiences make sense of events and

understand what is at stake (p. 53). Drawing on Entman's (1993) theory, framing works and influences the interpretation and public perception by emphasising certain aspects while dismissing others (pp. 52-54). Frames thus play a dual role: they simplify content for communicators and simultaneously shape how audiences understand and evaluate that content.

2.1.3 Key Framing Distinctions

In addition to its core function, framing theory has been expanded through the identification of two prominent distinctions: episodic vs. thematic and generic vs. issue-specific frames. These distinctions shape how issues are constructed and understood by audiences.

Iyengar (1991) introduced the distinction between episodic and thematic framing (p. 2). Episodic frames present issues as specific events or individual cases which often evoke emotional responses. Meanwhile, thematic frames contextualise issues within broader social or systemic frameworks (Semetko, 2000, p. 96; De Vreese, 2005, p. 55; Scheufele, 1999, p. 113). Iyengar found that exposure to episodic framing led viewers to blame individuals for social problems, whereas thematic framing attributed responsibility to broader structural or governmental issues (Semetko, 2000, p. 96).

Chong and Druckman (2007) reiterate this distinction, asserting that episodic frames shift responsibility to individuals, while thematic frames lead audiences to consider broader systemic or societal causes (pp. 106-107). This is relevant when analysing how the media frames Vivianne Miedema. Are her mental health struggles presented as an isolated personal issue, or do they indicate wider systemic issues in sport? As De Vreese (2005) points out, media outlets prevalently use episodic frames that favour simplified, dramatic, and personalised content (p. 56). These conventions reinforce audience tendencies to personalise responsibility and overlook structural dimensions of issues (De Vreese, 2005, p. 56).

De Vreese (2005) provides a clear distinction between generic and issue-specific frames (p. 51). While generic frames can be applicable across a variety of topics and contexts, issue-specific frames are created to suit a particular topic or events (De Vreese, 2005, pp. 54-55).

Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) identify five common generic frames: conflict, human interest, economic consequences, morality, and responsibility (pp. 93-96). These frames serve distinct narrative functions. The conflict frame emphasises disagreement and tension between individuals or groups. The human interest frame adds a personal or emotional perspective. The economic consequences frame focuses on the financial impact of an issue. The morality frame presents events in the context of religious or moral values and the responsibility frame attributes

accountability for causing or solving a problem (Semetko, 2000, pp. 93-96). These frames were originally identified in the context of political communication. When applying them in regard to media framing of athletes' mental health, the human-interest frame may emphasise personal struggles, whereas a responsibility frame may highlight who is to blame for the situation, such as the athlete or broader systemic issues in sports.

In contrast, issue-specific frames are adapted to the unique characteristics of an event or issue. De Vreese (2005) emphasises that these frames are relevant only to specific issues and are shaped by the context in which the issue appears (p. 54). The utilisation of issue-specific frames facilitates the comprehension of complex situations or issues.

When examining how the media frames Vivianne Miedema's mental health, both frames may be evident, depending on the objective and the medium.

2.2 Relevance of Framing Theory to this Study

Framing theory is essential for analysing how different types of media have framed Vivianne Miedema's mental health struggles. This framework allows an analysis of how meaning is constructed and communicated in different media formats. In this study media types refer to traditional online news articles, social media content (especially Instagram and TikTok), documentaries, and interviews. These formats vary in reach, audience engagement, targeting, objectives, and credibility which makes them especially relevant for a comparative framing analysis (Gillis, 2024, para. 4; Suraj, 2023, Difference section).

Entman's (1993) four framing functions, problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation, are essential in revealing how different types of media present Miedema's mental health (p. 52). These functions guide the analysis in identifying what is said about her struggles and how responsibility, value judgements, and solutions are distributed.

Additionally, the distinctions between generic and issue-specific frames and between episodic and thematic frames are relevant for analysing recurring patterns of how different media types construct narratives around Miedema's mental health. Generic frames, such as human interest or responsibility show how blame is distributed (Semetko, 2000, pp. 93-96). Issue-specific frames facilitate a deeper analysis of how Miedema's mental health struggles are framed by focusing on specific aspects (De Vreese, 2005, p. 54). Similarly, distinguishing between episodic and thematic framing makes it possible to assess whether Miedema's struggles are portrayed as isolated personal challenges or as part of broader systemic issues in elite sports (Semetko, 2000, p. 96; De Vreese, 2005, p. 55; Scheufele, 1999, p. 113). These distinctions directly support the research question. They

enable the study to reveal how different media types contribute to shaping public understanding of athlete mental health through their framing choices.

Framing theory therefore provides both a framework for understanding the issue and a methodological approach for analysing how the media frame Miedema's mental health struggles. This combination makes it the most suitable and essential theoretical approach.

2.3 Media Framing of Mental Health

This section outlines how mental health has typically been framed across different media contexts and how these frames shape public perception. Through an examination of existing literature, common patterns in the portrayal of mental illness such as danger or sensationalism are outlined. Further, framing patterns specific to elite athletes' mental health are covered. Finally, this section examines how framing theory has been applied in mental health research. These insights provide a foundation for analysing how the media portrays Miedema's struggles by embedding her coverage in broader contexts.

2.3.1 Framing Mental Health in the Media: Common Themes

The media frequently frames mental illness from a standpoint of danger and criminality, portraying individuals with mental health issues as violent or unpredictable (Zhang, 2024, pp. 967-970). This type of framing fuels public fear and stigma. Another prevalent frame is stigmatisation, where individuals are portrayed as either helpless victims or absurd individuals, rather than as ordinary people (Zhang, 2024, pp. 967-970).

Sensationalism is another common frame. Tabloids in particular utilise dramatic, exaggerating, and alarming language to attract attention (Zhang, 2024, pp. 969-972). This kind of reporting focuses on shock value and exceptional cases and has the potential to mislead the public and deepen existing misunderstandings. Similarly, Cohen (2019) found that TV shows prioritise sensationalism over accuracy and honesty when reporting or displaying mental illness (p. 145). Benbow (2007) likewise emphasises the frequent sensationalised reporting of news stories (p. 31).

Conversely, the media has been observed to scarcely employ frames of recovery and resilience. Stories that highlight someone's successful journey can counteract stigma (Corrigan et al., 2005, pp. 554-555; Ross et al., 2018, p. 11). Research indicates that audiences respond with greater support and less stigma when the media prioritises frames of recovery and hope (Hapig, 2024, pp.1-3).

These findings suggest that mental health coverage has evolved over time. While stigmatising

frames such as danger and sensationalism persist, coverage is shifting towards newer neutral and positive stories (Hapig, 2024, pp. 10-13). However, there is a notable gap in research with only limited sources explicitly analysing how mental health framing in the media has changed over time. This emphasises the overall relevance of the study and underscores the need for further research.

2.3.2 Framing Mental Health in Elite Sport: Athlete-specific Narratives

In sports media, mental health was long framed as a weakness. The coverage often stigmatised mental health issues to depict athletes as mentally invincible (Hapig, 2024, pp. 2-3). The idea of being mentally ill was seen as a flaw that only a few athletes spoke out about.

Recently, there has been a shift in coverage. As athletes like Simone Biles and Naomi Osaka have openly discussed mental health issues, media framing has shifted toward recognising performance pressure and mental health risks in elite sports (Hapig, 2024, pp. 1-2). Rather than scorn, many reports treat these cases with empathy, noting the intense competitive stress and often supporting and encouraging athletes to prioritise their mental health (Kumble et al., 2022, pp. 792-793). This reflects a reframing of vulnerability as acceptable and courageous. Media coverage now often praises athletes for speaking up about mental health as a form of strength. The weakness stigma is reduced by reframing seeking help as brave instead of shameful (Parry et al., 2023, pp. 5-8, 15-16).

Nonetheless, some old patterns persist. Tabloid coverage can still be harsh and prioritises sensationalism (Hapig, 2024, p. 12). Overall, though, sports media coverage is becoming more responsible on this issue and reception is increasingly positive. One study found that recent coverage is more likely to include expert input, context, and a supportive tone than in the past (Parry et al., 2023, pp. 11, 19-21). Broadsheet newspapers tend to frame athletes' mental health issues with understanding, whereas tabloid media still use sensationalising and manipulating methods (Hapig, 2024, pp. 11-12). Overall, the trend is toward empathy and normalisation in sports coverage.

2.3.3 Framing Theory in Mental Health Research

Episodic framing is frequently used in mental health research, depicting mental illness through individual cases rather than considering the broader social or structural contexts (Geise, 2024, p. 4). Geise (2024) asserts that episodic framing elicits strong emotional reactions from audiences (pp. 4, 8). Furthermore, Brossard et al. (2008) found that media coverage of health-related crises, such as epidemics, tends to emphasise sensational events and short-term consequences rather than systemic causes or structural factors (pp. 143, 156). Moreover, Zhang's (2017) study established that newspapers in the US predominantly used episodic frames when reporting on

depression (pp. 100-101).

In contrast, thematic framing has been found to be an effective method of reducing public stigma and increasing structural solutions by presenting individuals' mental health issues in relation to systemic challenges, such as political contribution (Geise, 2024, p.4). For instance, McGinty et al. (2019) found that media framing highlighting structural barriers to treatment increased the public's willingness to allocate additional resources to mental health services without elevating stigma (p. 1). Zhang (2017) established that Chinese media predominantly employed thematic framing when reporting on depression (pp. 100-101). However, there has been a gradual increase in episodic framing from 2000 to 2012 which may be linked to shifts in cultural and organisational orientations (Zhang, 2017, pp. 100-101).

Van den Heijkant (2024) found that mainstream media predominantly employs generic frames such as conflict and human interest (p. 1140). Brüggemann (2018) observes that although issue-specific frames are scarcely employed in mainstream media, they facilitate public comprehension of complex issues by offering a more nuanced understanding of the issue (pp. 92-95). In contrast, Li (2022) asserts that issue-specific frames were the most prevalent across Chinese and US media (pp. 306-308). This contradiction can be attributed to the divergent research objects of these studies.

Overall, episodic frames predominate mental health reporting, frequently reinforcing stigma and individual blame. While thematic frames are less prevalent, they have been shown to encourage empathy and support for systemic change. Differences in the use of issue-specific frames across studies suggest that framing patterns vary by media context and research focus.

2.4 Platform Specific Media Framing

This section reviews relevant research on platform-specific framing strategies to justify the analytical distinction made between media types in the subsequent results chapter. As this study analyses a multi-platform sample that includes social media posts, online news articles, YouTube interviews, and documentaries, it is essential to understand platform specific dynamics and variations. This section depicts that different media types such as traditional media, social media, interviews, and documentaries differ in their structural logic, audience engagement, and communicative aims. These variations in framing practices influence how issues are framed, whose voices are emphasised, and how narratives develop over time.

2.4.1 Traditional Media vs. Social Media

Framing strategies differ significantly between traditional and social media platforms due to

their divergent institutional structures, economic models, and objectives (Pujalte, 2020, pp. 2,7). Pujalte (2020) found that traditional media outlets in Spain emphasise political-institutional and financial sources, leading to frames that often corporate interests and prioritise the consequences and conflicts tied to institutional decisions (pp. 2, 12-13). In contrast, digital native platforms demonstrated more varied framing strategies. These outlets were more likely to use non-governmental sources and highlight the voices of affected citizens and social justice (Pujalte, 2020, pp. 10-11, 13-14). This reflects their alternative funding models which guarantees editorial independence from powerful economic stakeholders (Pujalte, 2020, p. 7).

Ahmed et al. (2019) found that globally, social media platforms enable users to bypass traditional news practices of gatekeeping and framing (pp. 2-4, 6). Social media platforms are often faster than traditional media and often rooted in citizen perspectives and emotional reactions (Ahmed et al., 2019, pp. 2-4, 6). This format allows space for marginalised and alternative discourses (Ahmed et al., 2019, p. 4).

Asad (2025) found that traditional media aims to spread well researched, crucial information to inform the audiences about the issue at hand (pp. 5-6). Contrary, social media prevalently uses personal narratives and more simple and easier available information (Asad, 2025, pp. 5-6 ; Bullock, 2021, p. 3). Papacharissi (2014) expands on this by introducing the concept of *affective publics* (pp. 120-126). This term describes that especially on social media, news emerges instantaneously and dynamically (Lünenborg, 2019, pp. 319-323). On these platforms, political discourses and meaning making are shaped by personal narratives and emotional expressions (Lünenborg, 2019, pp. 322-328). Social media posts are often immediate, informal, and lack established structures which makes them often less relevant or trustworthy (Lünenborg, 2019, pp. 319-320).

These differences between traditional and social media are particularly relevant to this study, as the sample consists of traditional media outlets and social media platforms. Understanding these platform-specific characteristics is crucial for assessing how mental health struggles are framed differently across media types.

2.4.2 News Articles vs. Documentaries vs. Interviews

Additionally, the study includes different media formats with news articles, documentaries, and interviews. Each format has different narrative structures and framing tendencies that influence how stories are constructed and perceived.

Media framing varies significantly across formats such as news articles, documentaries, and interviews. All of these shapes public understanding in distinct ways. News articles often rely on

episodic and thematic frames to influence interpretation and public perception (Tarish et al., 2022, p. 3). Carter (2013) found that news media frequently lacks contextualisation (pp. 7-10). Issues are often presented by emphasising a personal experience without including broader aspects. Additionally, within sports, issues are often framed as a shared responsibility (Carter, 2013, pp. 7-10).

Contrarily, documentaries use storytelling and visuals to construct deeper, more emotional portrayals of social movements and issues. These themes construct emotional and sympathetic public narratives. Filmmakers deliberately choose what to include or exclude by highlighting particular characters, images, or storylines. These decisions guide the audience's emotions, understanding, and interpretation (Stover, 2013, pp. 56-57). This process is inherently selective and reflects the filmmakers' objectives.

In the context of investigative interviews, the approach taken by the interviewer has a significant impact on the level of trust established and the quality of information obtained (Weiher et al., 2022, pp. 1-3). These frames influence the content that emerges from interviews as well as how audiences perceive credibility and emotionality (Weiher et al., 2022, p. 2). Moreover, interviews frequently use emotional narratives and personal experiences (Philipps, 2019, p. 62).

By accounting for these distinctions, this section lays the groundwork for the subsequent analysis, which compares how mental health struggles are framed across media types. This ensures that the results chapter situates the framing patterns within broader tendencies.

3. Method

3.1 Research Design and Methodological Rationale

To address the research question and sub-research questions, the study employs a mixed method research design, employing both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative aspect facilitates an in-depth and flexible interpretation of media narratives and the social contexts that shape them (Oranga, 2023, pp. 1-3). Rather than focusing on measurable trends, a qualitative analysis unveils the underlying meanings and values embedded in media texts (Oranga, 2023, p. 3). The quantitative component enables to measure and analyse the qualitative identified data objectively and methodically (Munther, 2024, p. 11). This method facilitates a more systematic and generalisable understanding of the findings, making this approach the most suited to identify how different types of media have framed Vivianne Miedema's mental health struggles.

More specifically, this study employs an exploratory sequential design. This research design starts with a qualitative data analysis to explore the case. The quantitative phase emerges out of the qualitative findings (Orina, 2015, p.7). This design is particularly well suited for study's that explore new research area with little existing data (Ahmed, 2024, pp. 2-3). Thus, it is a suitable design for this case study as the area and case depict broad research gaps as identified in chapter 2. The data is initially analysed qualitatively. The subsequent quantitative analysis of these findings enables to answer sub-research questions and uncovers patterns within the data set (Ahmed, 2024, pp. 2-3). Thus, a mixed method, exploratory sequential design, is the most suited to reveal how different media types frame Miedema's mental health.

The study employs qualitative content analysis (QCA) as its broad methodological approach. QCA is a research method that facilitates the subjective interpretation of textual data through a systematic process of coding and identifying themes or patterns (Cengiz, 2021, pp. 4-5). QCA is more flexible and adaptable than quantitative analysis, which is predicated on measurable and numerical data (Oranga, 2023, p. 2). The process is iterative and reflexive. Thus, categories emerge directly from the data. This approach facilitates the exploration of nuanced meaning, narrative structure, and contextual depth (Dunivin, 2025, pp. 1-2). This inductive coding approach has been demonstrated to be particularly suited in the interpretation of complex and layered textual material (Dunivin, 2025, p. 6). The QCA aligns well with the objective of this study as it allows for an analysis of how mental health narratives are constructed across different types of media.

Within the overarching QCA framework, this study employs qualitative framing analysis (QFA) as its primary analytical tool. While QCA provides a flexible and iterative method for identifying themes and patterns, QFA focuses more specifically on how the media select, emphasise, and structure meaning. Framing analysis facilitates identifying how the media promotes particular

interpretations. The media have the capacity to significantly shape the public's understanding of an issue by selecting and emphasising certain aspects of reality (De Vreese, 2005, pp. 52-53; Entman, 1993, p. 52).

The study employs Entman's (1993) four framing functions: problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation as interpretive tools to systematically analyse the data (p. 52). These functions provide a structured approach to coding and analysing the data. They help to identify overarching frames (e.g. supportive, stigmatising, sensational) which are used by the media to represent Miedema's mental health in different media types (see Appendix A2.2).

In addition to Entman's framing functions, the study draws on two key framing distinctions: episodic versus thematic frames (Iyengar, 1991) and generic versus issue-specific frames (De Vreese, 2005) to support the comparative aspect of the study (De Vreese, 2005, p. 51; Entman, 1993, p. 52; Iyengar, 1991, p. 2). The utilisation of these distinctions facilitates the evaluation of whether Miedema's mental health struggles are presented as individualised or systematic, and whether they focus on personal experiences or broader social structures.

As outlined by Monfared and Derakhshan (2015), quantitative research refers to counts and measurements to generate numeric data and results (pp. 1111-1112). This quantitative component is integrated by counting the frequency of specific frames, overarching framing categories, and key framing distinctions (see Appendix A2.4, A2.5, A3.3). This numeric data identifies dominant frames and significant differences and variations across the media types. For instance, the number of supportive framings is quantified and compared across online news articles, documentaries, YouTube interviews, and social media posts (see Appendix A2.4).

The choice of QFA is methodologically and theoretically aligned with the research aim. The value of the approach lies in its ability to reveal nuanced insights into complex issues by examining how language is used to shape the way in which audiences interpret an issue. By quantifying the identified frames and comparing them across media types, the mixed methods approach strengthens the interpretive findings with measurable evidence. The triangulation of the qualitative and quantitative findings enhances the credibility, reliability, and analytical depth of the study (Ahmed, 2024, p. 5). The mixed approach facilitates more extended understandings of complex issues which leads to more nuanced conclusions and richer insights (Ahmed, 2024, p. 2).

Ultimately, this methodological design provides a framework for exploring the framing of mental health in women's sports. It connects and applies the theoretical framework to the data, facilitating media types to be compared and their underlying significance to be understood. The combination of qualitative and quantitative components ensures a richer and multidimensional understanding of how Miedema's mental health struggles are framed across media types.

3.2 Case Study Justification

This study focuses on Viviane Miedema as a case study due to her unique position as one of the most prominent female footballers who has publicly addressed mental health challenges (Olympics, n.d., para. 3). The value of a case study lies in its ability to reveal nuanced insights into complex issues (Crowe et al., 2011, pp. 1-4, 7). They are particularly valuable when the case is information rich as this offers insights and understanding into key research issues (Patton, 2015, pp. 105, 401). Miedema's case is rich in data due to her openness about her mental health struggles which is extensively covered across different media types. Moreover, it is symbolic of broader dynamics prevalent in elite women's sports. This strategic selection of the case enables a comparative and frame-focused analysis.

Contrary to the extensive research that has already been conducted on elite female athletes such as Simone Biles and Naomi Osaka (Everbach et al., 2024, pp. 2, 4-6). Miedema's case remains underexplored despite the significant media attention. As a prominent figure in women's football and a mental health advocate, Miedema's case is distinctive, sensitive, and has been inadequately researched. The utilisation of a case study enables comprehensive research by exploring a relevant case through various sources (Farquhar, 2012, p. 6). As Schoch (2020) found, a case study becomes especially vulnerable when it offers the opportunity to learn from it and when the results can be applied to broader situations (p. 246). Miedema's case is extensively covered across various media types, making it particularly well-suited for a comparative framing analysis. The diversity of the case study enables the examination of how different platforms frame athletes' mental health. Consequently, the case study guides the analysis and reveals insights into broader trends in media and society.

3.3 Sampling and Data Collection

3.3.1 Sampling Logic and Criteria

The study employs a purposeful criterion sampling strategy with elements of maximum variation sampling to select information-rich sources that meet the study's analytical objectives. All of the selected media units were published between 2018 and 2025. Purposeful sampling is especially suitable in qualitative research which aims for depth rather than generalisation (Shaheen et al., 2019, p. 26). It allows for the intentional selection of materials that are most relevant for understanding how the media frame Vivianne Miedema's mental health struggles. The main inclusion criteria were the explicit reference to Miedema's mental health, either directly or thematically. Thus, the media unit had to mention certain key words such as anxiety, depression, stress and discuss these. For instance, a source was included if it used such terms in the context of Miedema's personal

experiences or linked them thematically to pressure, injury, or performance. The selection further considered diversity in media type, narrative depth, and platform-specific style to enable for comparative insights across different formats.

A maximum variation sampling was adopted to ensure that framing patterns could be analysed across a spectrum of media types. The sample included a variety of media formats such as written online news articles, Instagram and TikTok posts, YouTube interviews, and a documentary series. The sources include both mainstream and independent online outlets, as well as various media formats such as written articles, social media posts, audiovisual interviews, and a documentary. As Patton (2015) argues, maximum variation sampling strengthens the study's capacity to detect both recurring patterns and divergences in framing (pp. 428-429). For example, social media posts often featured personal and informal narratives. Contrary, news articles tended to adopt more factual and structured framing (see Appendix A2.2, A2.4). Narrative depth was considered in relation to how extensively the content explored Miedema's mental health. For instance, whether it briefly and superficially mentioned struggles or offered detailed and reflective or even solution-oriented accounts. These criteria were used during the selection process to ensure that the sample captured a wide range of platforms and framing emphases.

Each media sample was thematically segmented. Thus, entire articles, interview sequences, or posts were selected if they fulfilled the framing relevant criterion. This approach aligns with Elo et al.'s (2014) guidance to choose units in a way that maintains contextual integrity while still allowing for focused and meaningful coding (p. 5). It ensured that the material was neither fragmented nor overly broad to support interpretive depth and analytic transparency.

3.3.2 Sample Description and Scope

Data collection was carried out between March and April 2025 using a structured, iterative process. A predefined set of keywords, including "Vivianne Miedema", "mental health", "struggles", "opens up", "pressure", "anxiety", was used to search engines (e.g. Google, Google News), official websites (e.g. The Guardian), and social media platforms (Instagram, TikTok). Appendix A1.1 provides a detailed overview of all sampled media items, including their publication date, length, a short summary, and media type. Social media posts were collected through a combination of manual browsing of relevant accounts (e.g. Miedema's personal account, her clubs, sports media outlets) and the use of platform search functions, including the predefined keywords and hashtag searches. For Miedema's own posts, only the comments were analysed and the caption to classify the post, as this study excludes personal framing. For other posts, the visual content (if it entailed text), captions, and comments were coded. For audiovisual content, interviews and documentaries were included if they

contained at least one thematically rich reference. All relevant segments were manually transcribed to ensure accurate interpretation during the coding process.

Despite the broad sampling techniques and an extensive search across multiple platforms, only 48 media units met the study's inclusion criteria of thematic relevance and depth regarding mental health framing. This limited number reflects the general lack of available content on Vivianne Miedema's mental health struggles.

The final sample consists of 48 media units which are distributed across four distinct media types and were published between 2018 and 2025. All units explicitly mention mental health or related themes (e.g. injury recovery, pressure, visibility). The sample size was guided by the thesis requirements and determined through a proportional adaption. This process ensured feasibility while maintaining analytical depth and diversity. As the study includes several media types, the number of units in each category was slightly reduced. This ensured a manageable dataset that captured relevant content and a range of representation. For instance, the five YouTube interviews (114 minutes) and five documentary episodes (122 minutes) together approximate the viewing time of the recommended 30-40 short YouTube videos. Similarly, the 20 articles represented a subset of the 40-60 outlined in the requirements. The number of social media posts (18) is lower than the 150 recommended posts which is acknowledged in the limitations in section 5.4. During the previously described selection process, only 18 relevant posts were identified. The final sample consists of:

Table 1

Overview of Final Media Sample

Media Type	Quantity	Duration/Length	Selection Criteria
Online News Articles	20	Each over 300 words	Keyword searches on Google, Google News, and relevant outlets (e.g. The Guardian). Selection criteria included relevance to the topic, word count, and diversity in outlets.
Documentary Series	5	122 minutes total	All episodes from *Step by Step* (Arsenal series). Selected for relevance and richness of mental health themes. Relevant segments were transcribed and coded.

YouTube Interviews	5	114 minutes total	Identified with keyword searches and scanning relevant titles (e.g. panic attacks); selected based on relevance, format variations (one-on-one/panel style), diversity in sources, setting, and style (casual/professional, in person/online).
Social Media Posts	18	Mixed media content	Posts from Instagram and TikTok, retrieved using Google and platform searches of keywords; selected for thematic relevance, clarity, engagement, and account variety (media organisations, fan-based accounts, Miedema herself).

3.4 Data Analysis Procedure

3.4.1 Coding and Categorisation

The study applied a combination of inductive or data-driven and deductive or concept-driven analytical strategies to systematically identify and interpret media frames. The analysis followed a three-stage coding process: open coding, axial coding, and interpretive categorisation.

The initial phase was data driven; frames were derived through open coding based on what emerged from the material itself. Inductive analysis stays close to the data with frames emerging simultaneously. This facilitated patterns and themes to surface without being constrained by pre-existing theoretical frameworks. Open coding was applied to all media units. This involved reading the material closely and developing codes from the data based on what was observed. These codes served as frame labels. They were assigned to quotes, descriptions, or captions, which acted as the data units. Open coding is essential in qualitative studies to thoroughly and systematically examine the data (see Appendix A1.2, A2.2; McLeod, 2024, pp.1-2).

Secondarily, axial coding was used to group these labels into overarching categories. This process identified recurring patterns that reflected broader framing categories such as structural critique or personal responsibility (see Appendix A2.3). Open coding is valuable as it facilitates identifying common themes and differences regarding the comparative aspect of the study (Scott, 2017, p. 1).

Finally, the media items were categorised as episodic or thematic, and generic or issue-specific, depending on how the frames were constructed and contextualised (see Appendix A1.3, A3.1).

To support the comparison across media types, the frequency and percentage of each code and coding category were calculated (see Appendix A2.4, A2,5, A3.3). This quantitative step completed the qualitative analysis by emphasising which frames appeared most often across different media types. This also ensured consistency in the interpretation.

Each code/frame label was analysed using Entman's (1993) four framing functions; problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation to analyse how the frames operate within the media item (see Appendix A1.2; Entman, 1993, p. 52). For a code to be defined as a frame, at least two of Entman's functions had to be present. This ensured conceptual consistency and prevented overinterpretation or over coding.

Ultimately, the coding began inductively and then progressed to an analysis guided by the conceptual framework. After developing the codes directly from the data, these were connected back to the theoretical framework.

3.4.2 Manual Coding and Data Organisation

This study employed a manual coding and organisation process. Given the sample size and the close, iterative nature of the analysis, coding was conducted without the use of software. Manual coding allowed for more flexibility, immersion, and close engagement with the data (Mattimoe, 2021, p. 4). All media items were first logged into a table (see Appendix A1.1). This media sample overview includes media type, title, author, publication date, a brief summary, and the original URL. To aid visual clarity and facilitate cross platform comparison, different media types were colour coded.

Subsequently, each media item was read and analysed in detail. A dedicated coding table was created to document each identified frame (see Appendix A2.2). For each frame, the table included: the frame/code label, the corresponding problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation (based on Entman's framework), and the quote from which the frame was derived/ which best depicts the code (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Afterwards, the

initial codes were group into overarching framing categories for improved clarity and comparison (see Appendix A2.3).

To further support analytical transparency, a frequency tables was created to depict how often each frame appeared across the dataset (see Appendix A2.4).

Additionally, larger, overarching frame categories were established through axial coding (see Appendix A2.3). Their prevalence across media types was documented in a separate table (see Appendix A2.5).

Finally, to address the sub-research questions and support the comparative aspect of the study, two additional tables were created to classify each media unit as either episodic or thematic, and generic or issue-specific (see Appendix A1.3, A3.3).

This rigorous, manual coding process enabled a systematic comparison of different media formats while ensuring a transparent and replicable analysis process. A code list which entails all the identified codes throughout this process can be found in Appendix A2.1.

3.5 Operationalisation of Theoretical Concepts

This study applies framing theory as both a theoretical foundation and a methodological framework to reveal how different media types frame Vivianne Miedema's mental health struggles. To ensure transparency and analytical rigour, key theoretical concepts were operationalised into identifiable elements within the dataset. This operationalisation connects the theoretical concepts with the empirical material by outlining how frames were identified and coded.
Entman's (1993) four framing functions were utilised as the core analytical tools (see Appendix A1.2; Entman, 1993, p. 52).

1. Problem definition (What is the issue?)
2. Causal interpretation (What or who is responsible?)
3. Moral evaluation (What value judgments are expressed?)
4. Treatment recommendation (What solutions are proposed or implied?)

These four functions formed the analytical lens through which media contents were interpreted. For instance, a quote that blames club management for athlete burnout might be coded as systematic struggles. This code is then interpreted through Entman's framework. It includes a problem definition (burnout in elite sport), a causal interpretation (the role of club management), and a treatment recommendation (the need for structural change) (see Appendix A1.2; Entman, 1993, p. 52). Entman's functions were not merely used to detect whether a frame was present. Instead, they served as interpretive tools to understand how meaning was constructed.

As outlined in section 3.4, open coding was initially used to generate inductive frame labels (e.g. supportive, systematic struggles, sensationalised). These codes captured the core meaning of

relevant parts of each data unit. These codes were then analysed through Entman's four framing functions to understand how each code constructs meaning (see Appendix A2.2; Entman, 1993, p. 52). Subsequently, during the axial coding process, the codes were grouped into larger overarching patterns (see Appendix A2.3). For instance, the quote "everybody needs support" (Sky Sports, 2023, para. 3), was initially coded as 'supportive framing'. This quote was then analysed through Entman's lens. It contained a problem definition (legitimacy, importance of mental health struggles), a moral evaluation (importance of support/help), and a treatment recommendation (more mental health resources) (see Appendix A2.2). During axial coding, this code was grouped into the broader category 'affirmative framing' (see Appendix A2.3).

Further theoretical distinctions were applied to enrich the analysis (see Appendix A1.3).

1. Episodic vs. thematic framing (Iyengar, 1991, p. 2). This distinction was used to assess whether Miedema's struggles were framed as isolated, personal events (episodic) or as part of broader structural and systematic issues in women's football (thematic).

2. Generic vs. issue specific (De Vreese, 2005, p. 51). This distinction was used to determine whether the media employed broad, cross-contextual frames (generic), or issue-specific frames that address unique structural or sport-related dimensions within the context of mental health in women's football.

Entire media items were categorised as episodic or thematic, and generic or issue-specific, depending on how the frames were constructed and contextualised, using the analytical instrument outlined in Appendix A1.3. For example, if an article focused solely on Miedema's personal experience during a specific competition without connecting it to broader trends, it was labelled as episodic. If the same article framed her experience as a representation of systematic issues in women's football, it was categorised as thematic. This interpretive categorisation enabled a comparative analysis of framing patterns across platforms. By applying these distinctions, the study was able to identify broader patterns in the framing differences of athlete mental health.

This operationalisation strategy ensured that theoretical concepts were systematically applied to the data. For a code to be defined as a frame, at least two of Entman's functions had to be present. This ensured that the study maintained analytical clarity and avoided overinterpretation. Moreover, aligning the coding process with the theoretical aims of the study enabled a systematic comparison across different media types

3.6 Reliability, Validity, and Generalisability

In qualitative research, reliability and validity are conceptualised in terms of credibility, consistency, and rigour throughout the research process. Kirk and Miller (2011) define reliability as "the degree to which the findings of a study are independent of accidental circumstances of their

production" (Kirk and Miller, 2011, pp. 7-8; Silverman, 2011, pp. 360-385). In this study, reliability was ensured through a systematic data collection, clear definition of the coding procedure and criteria, a consistent application of the theoretical framework, as well as constant data comparison (Leung, 2015, p. 326). As this study employs a mixed approach, these methods were used to ensure the qualitative part of the study is methodologically strong. This section focuses on qualitative reliability and validity as the quantitative aspect (based on frequency counts) exclusively supports and strengthens these findings. Coding was conducted manually. This enabled close engagement with the data and allowed for iterative revisiting, comparison, and refinement of frame categories. Manual coding can enhance reliability by increasing sensitivity to context and interpretive nuance. As Bengtsson (2016) notes, manual approaches can provide transparent, replicable, and trustworthy results, as long as this process is systematically organised, well documented, and consistently applied (p. 11). This was ensured by developing a detailed coding scheme based on Entman's four framing functions, iteratively reviewing and refining codes and categories, and documenting the coding process (Entman, 1993, p. 52).

Validity has been defined as the extent to which an account "accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers" (Hammersley, 1990, in Silverman, 2011, p. 367). For accurate validity the tools, processes, and data in the study must be appropriate (Leung, 2015, p. 325). Thus, the methodological choices must be made in regard to answering the research question (Cypress, 2017, pp. 256-257). This study ensures validity through analytical induction, constant comparison, and comprehensive data treatment (Silverman, 2011, pp. 360-385). The analysis examined all selected data units, and each emerging frame was constantly compared with previously examined data units. This allowed for a nuanced interpretation and comprehensive treatment. Moreover, the data sampling, analysis, and methodology has been defined and applied in regard to the study's objectives (Leung, 2015, p. 325).

In terms of generalisability, the study's findings offer theoretical transferability. Thus, the framing patterns that have been identified in this case study can be meaningfully applied to similar media contexts. This is ensured through reliability and validity in the study (Parker, 2016, p. 137). The results of this case study are thus highly valuable to the broader field of mental health framing in elite women's sport.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

This study did not involve human participants or sensitive data collection. However, ethical considerations remained central to the data collection and interpretation process. All materials analysed in this study were publicly accessible. Social media content was only included if it originated from public accounts (Wiedicke, 2023, p. 363). The analysed sources were used to benefit the public

by identifying broader insights into the media's framing of mental health in women's football (Wiedicke, 2023, p. 362-363). To ensure that the study remained focused on media representation, no claims or psychological labels were assigned to Miedema's well-being beyond what was explicitly stated. Finally, all media sources were documented and cited. Relevant parts in audiovisual content were transcribed and will be made available.

4. Results

The following chapter presents the findings of the framing analysis conducted on the media portrayal of Vivianne Miedema's mental health struggles from 2018 to 2025. The primary aim is to explore how different types of media (news articles, social media posts, documentaries, and YouTube interviews) have framed Miedema's mental health. The study identifies distinct frames and categorises them within broader themes. Entman's (1993) four framing functions are used as an analytical lens (p. 52).

Section 4.1 of this chapter provides an overview of the overarching framing categories and the frames these emerged out of. It analyses the frequency with which these frames appear across different media types and key patterns, addressing sub-research questions 1 and 2. Section 4.2 analyses how platforms construct these frames. It outlines platform-specific variations by examining how Miedema's mental health is framed within each media type (sub-research question 2 and 3). Section 4.3 addresses differences in the thematic framing across platforms, focusing on distinctions between episodic vs. thematic and generic vs. issue-specific framing, thereby answering the sub-research questions 4 and 5.

By analysing these findings, this chapter contributes to understanding the role of different types of media in presenting mental health struggles in the context of elite female athletes. The results are interpreted in accordance with the research aim of examining media-specific constructions of mental health in sports.

4.1 Framing Categories and Frequency Across Media Types

This section addresses sub-research question 1: What framing categories emerge in media portrayals of Vivianne Miedema's mental health struggles? Additionally, the discussion partially addresses sub-research question 2: How do these framing categories vary in frequency and distribution across media types?

The analysis identifies 15 framing codes that reflect different aspects in the coverage of Miedema's mental health struggles (see Appendix A2.2). This section analyses the five key framing categories that group these individual frames together in order of their prevalence (see Appendix A2.3). These categories vary in terms of their emphasis and thus convey a distinct perspective of how Miedema's mental health is represented. The five emerging framing categories are: affirmative framing, personal struggle and identity framing, critical and systematic framing, performance-oriented framing, and misrepresentative framing. For each framing category, this section provides a definition, the frames from which it emerged, the frequency with which it appears, and key patterns in how it is represented in different media formats. This section aims to provide a comprehensive

understanding of how mental health struggles are portrayed in the media by analysing how the categories are represented across different media types. By examining the overall prevalence of these categories and their distribution across formats, this section also contributes to answering sub-research question 2.

4.1.1 Affirmative Framing

Affirmative framing is the most prevalent category in the media coverage of Miedema's mental health struggles, appearing across all media types but especially in YouTube interviews and online news articles. This category includes five frames: supportive, resilience, role model, support system, and stigma-breaking (see Appendix A2.3 and A2.5). These frames emphasise empathy, legitimacy, and openness. They portray Miedema's struggles as valid and her advocacy as socially valuable.

According to Entman's (1993) framework, this framing category defines the central problem as the stigma surrounding mental health (p. 52). It offers a causal interpretation by linking this stigma to silence and internalised pressure. The moral evaluation suggests that being open and vulnerable is a strength. As a treatment recommendation, this frame encourages seeking professional help, speaking out about mental health, and creating supportive environments (see Appendix A2.2; Entman, 1993, p. 52).

Affirmative mental health framing appears most frequently in YouTube interviews, where the format allows for extended and honest conversations. On average there were three affirmative mentions per video (see Appendix A2.5). For instance, in a DAZN Women's Football interview (2022), the host emphasises the importance of hearing Miedema "[...] in your own words rather than putting them in your mouth" (DAZN Women's Football, 2022, 33:32). This quote highlights the interview format's ability to create space for direct expression and empathic portrayal. The Women's Game (2024a) notes, "Viv was incredible, I'm so struck by her maturity and awareness around mental health", framing her as resilient and a role model while recognising the difficulties around mental health struggles (The Women's Game, 2024a, 33:10). These portrayals highlight strength and openness, presenting Miedema as someone who uses her platform to advocate for destigmatisation.

Online news articles, documentaries, and social media posts also frequently feature affirmative framing, especially in units that highlight Miedema's advocacy, support systems, or personal reflections on mental health (see Appendix A2.2). For instance, affirmative framing was identified twice per analysed article on average. Across formats, this framing category tends to highlight positive moral evaluations and collective responsibility rather than individual blame.

4.1.2 Personal Struggle and Identity Framing

Personal struggle and identity framing is the second most prevalent category, appearing frequently in YouTube and online articles, and to a lesser extent in social media posts and documentaries (see Appendix A2.5). This category includes vulnerability, mental health and identity, individual struggles, and personal responsibility frames (see Appendix A2.3 and A2.5). These frames present mental health as a deeply personal, ongoing issue which is intertwined with individual identity.

This category defines the problem as the emotional burden of mental health issues on the individual. It attributes it causally to internal struggles or personality traits. The moral evaluation emphasises the importance of authenticity. As a treatment recommendation, it implicitly promotes self-awareness and personal coping, often without professional or systematic support (see Appendix A2.2).

Personal struggle and identity frames appear most commonly in YouTube interviews that emphasise Miedema's openness. This framing appeared once per analysed episode on average. For instance, in an article by Arsenal Media (2023), she states "Honestly, it's not easy for me to talk about these things either because it's something I'll probably struggle with for the rest of my life" (Arsenal Media, 2023, para. 4). Such statements frame mental health as an ongoing part of her identity. This framing encourages empathy while suggesting that coping is a personal responsibility.

While personal struggle and identity frames humanise Miedema's struggles and facilitate emotional connection and destigmatisation, they often lack references to broader structural solutions or external support. This suggests that while this framing encourages relatability, it also individualises the responsibility for managing mental health.

4.1.3 Critical and Systematic Framing

Critical and systematic framing emphasises structural and cultural deficiencies in the support of athletes' mental health. It includes systematic struggles, stigmatising, and performance pressure frames (see Appendix A2.3 and A2.5). This category critiques the broader system and portrays mental health challenges as rooted in inadequate support, unrealistic expectations, and persistent stigma.

This framing defines the problem as institutional or cultural failures. It causally links these failures to the pressure of professional sports and the lack of adequate institutional support. The moral evaluation presents a critique of the existing system. As a treatment recommendation, it advocates for structural reforms, improved mental health services, and cultural change within sports (see Appendix A2.2).

This framing was most common in online articles and YouTube interviews, that situate Miedema's experiences within broader critiques of elite sports. In 18 out of 20 articles, critical and systematic framing was used. For instance, Arsenal Media (2023) discusses the lack of institutional mental health support and the pressure that is placed on athletes to push beyond what is necessary or healthy (see Appendix A1.1 and A2.2). YouTube interviews and documentaries adopt this framing by including personal experiences that reveal systematic issues. In a DAZN Women's Football interview (2022), Miedema states, "Once you've been doing this [for] 8 or 9 years without having a proper break, you start feeling it" (DAZN Women's Football, 2022, 1:10). This example connects mental health struggles to structural demands. Social media posts rarely feature critical and systematic frames.

4.1.4 Performance-Oriented Framing

Performance-oriented framing presents mental health primarily through its impact on athletic performance. It includes performance-centred and medicalised frames (see Appendix A2.3 and A2.5). This category presents mental health as a factor that hinders performance and often uses medical terms and clinical diagnosis to emphasise the importance of managing it efficiently.

This framing defines the problem as impaired athletic performance. It attributes the cause to unaddressed mental health issues. The moral evaluation emphasises success and functionality as the highest priority. As a treatment recommendation, it encourages athletes to seek professional medical support primarily to prevent mental health from hindering their success (see Appendix A2.2).

This framing was most common in online articles and documentaries. It appeared in 8 out of 20 online articles analysed. For instance, Young (2024) discusses: "[Miedema's] panic attacks left her [...] drained for days, sometimes unable to partake in training" (Young, 2024, para. 2). Such statements present mental health as a risk to professional performance. While this framing can validate mental health as a serious concern it can reduce athletes' experiences to solely affecting their performance. YouTube videos, such as in JOE (2023), also utilise this framing, though to a lesser extent (see Appendix A2.2). Social media posts rarely feature this frame, as they tend to focus on personal advocacy and awareness (see Appendix A1.1).

4.1.5 Misrepresentative Framing

Misrepresentative framing includes frames that prioritise drama or engagement. This frame category often lacks nuance or depth in portraying mental health. It consists of a sensationalised and dismissive frame (see Appendix A2.3 and A2.5). These frames are often dismissive and tend to focus on exaggeration or scandalising aspects of mental health struggles to generate more clicks or views.

Since sensational framing often focuses on dramatization, it commonly lacks clear solutions.

Misrepresentative framing is the least common category. It appeared in only 3 out of the 48 analysed units and was confined to online articles and social media posts. Within these, it was used to emphasise the emotional impact on viewer engagement through dramatizing language or by highlighting seemingly unnecessary additions (see Appendix A2.3). For instance, the article by Batte (2024), adds: "[this] was also difficult for Myle, the puppy she shares with Mead" after discussing Miedema's mental health struggles (Batte, 2024, para. 4). Although this frame remains less prevalent overall, the media utilises it to exaggerate or dismiss aspects of Miedema's struggles through terms such as "unfortunate" or "nothing new" for sensational or trivialising effects (see Appendix A2.2; Common Goal, 2023; Young, 2024).

4.1.6 Framing Categories Conclusion

This section has outlined the five overarching framing categories (affirmative, personal struggle and identity, critical and systematic, performance-oriented, and misrepresentative framing) and their frequency across media types. These findings directly answer sub-research question 1 by identifying and defining the five framing categories that structure how Miedema's mental health is represented in the media.

The analysis reveals that affirmative framing is the most prevalent across all platforms. Legitimacy, resilience, and stigma-breaking narratives are constantly highlighted. However, the presentation, framing emphasis, and purpose of this framing vary depending on the platform. Each medium reflects its own narrative priorities and areas of focus. Secondary framing categories, such as personal struggle or critical framing, also differ notably in both prevalence and expression. These findings suggest that media type plays a central role in shaping how mental health is represented, thus providing partial insight into sub-research question 2 by depicting how the frequency and distribution of framing categories differ across media types.

While this section focused on categorising and identifying the frequency of framing categories, it only partially reveals how Miedema's mental health is constructed in the media. The subsequent section conducts a comparative analysis to examine platform-specific patterns. It shifts the focus from the overall distribution and definition of frames to how each platform communicates and prioritises specific frames. This comparative lens supports the analysis which is essential to thoroughly address sub-research question 2 and 3.

4.2 Cross Media Comparison

This section addresses sub-research question 3: How do different media types construct the

previously identified frames and how are these constructions shaped by platform-specific convention? Additionally, it completes the answer to sub-research question 2 by directly comparing the distribution and construction of each framing category across media types.

This section builds on the framing categories and patterns established in the previous section. It examines how different media platforms construct and communicate these frames in three parts. Section 4.2.1 examines how affirmative framing appears across media types while adopting different styles and emphases. Section 4.2.2 discusses each media type's most prevalent secondary frame. Section 4.2.3 discusses frames that appear less frequently but nonetheless reveal platform-specific framing tendencies.

4.2.1 Dominance of Affirmative Framing Across Platforms

As outlined in 4.1, affirmative framing is the most prevalent category across all media types in the portrayal of Miedema's mental health. The construction and emphasis within this frame differ significantly by platform. These variations are shaped by each format's narrative style, audience engagement, and representational priorities. While the core messages of destigmatisation, validation, and advocacy remains, the frames and tones vary.

In YouTube interviews, affirmative framing is represented through stigma-breaking (in 100% of the 5 media units), role model (3 of 5), and resilience (3 of 5) frames (see Appendix A2.3, A2.4, A2.5). The long-form, conversational nature of these interviews seems to allow for deeper emotional expression and personal reflection (see Appendix A1.1). Miedema is constantly framed as a courageous person who speaks openly about mental health and challenges taboos within sports and society. One interviewer affirms, "I'm so glad to hear that you are part of moving this towards a place where there's less stigma around talking about it." (The Women's Game, 2024a, 12:45), framing Miedema's openness as socially impactful. Through role model framing, YouTube videos often present Miedema as a leading voice in reducing mental health stigma. She is praised for using her platform to normalise mental health conversations and inspire others. One interviewer notes, "Miedema has grown into a player who speaks her mind about sensitive subjects." (NOS Sport, 2023, 4:56). The Women's Game (2024a) comments on her authenticity and openness, "Viv was so incredible, I'm so struck by her maturity and awareness around mental health" (The Women's Game, 2024a, 33:10). The resilience frame complements this, portraying Miedema as someone who not only speaks out but works through mental health challenges. In a DAZN (2022) interview she asserts, "I need some time for myself. To then become a better player", reinforcing the idea that mental health care is not a weakness and framing her as someone who persists despite challenges (DAZN, 2022, 2:00).

In online articles, affirmative framing centres primarily on role model (11 of 20) and support system (9 of 20) frames (see Appendix A2.4). These present Miedema as an inspirational person who initiates progress. For instance, Cardy (2023) states, "It's great when we have role models on the very top that speak about those situations." (Cardy, 2023, para. 5). Another article highlights her impact as a public figure on breaking stigma in football "From winning the Euros on home soil to becoming a global advocate for mental health, Viv's journey is defined by resilience, authenticity, and the pursuit of balance" (LRI 10 23, 2025, para. 1). News articles also emphasise the shared responsibility of mental health support, as captured by Sky Sports (2023): "Everybody needs support" (Sky Sports, 2023, para. 3). These examples emphasise a shared responsibility in promoting mental health within sports institutions and clubs.

On social media, affirmative framing is more emotionally immediate and inspirational, represented through supportive (15 of 18) and role model (10 of 18) frames (see Appendix A2.4). These often emerge through user comments, which express empathy, encouragement, and personal impact. Comments such as "You will get through it" (Vivianne Miedema, 2023) or "[Miedema] helped me more than she can ever realize" (Pitch News, 2024) reflect the emotionally supportive character of social media. Social media praises Miedema as an inspirational athlete and person. Comments such as "incredible role model, incredible human" (Vivianne Miedema, 2024), "Seeing someone you look up to talk so openly" (Common Goal, 08.11.2023), and "Made mental health easier to talk about!" (Vivianne Miedema, 2024a) reinforce the perception of Miedema as a key influence in shaping public discourse on mental health. Social media emphasises visibility and relatability and presents Miedema as an exceptional and accessible person.

In documentaries, affirmative framing appears primarily through the support system (2 of 5) and supportive frame (2 of 5) (see Appendix A2.4). These long-form visual narratives often highlight the role of team environments and support staff in enabling athletes to speak openly. For instance, in Step by Step (Arsenal, 2023), Miedema reflects, "Along the way I started realising that if I would let people help me, I would start feeling better about it" (Arsenal, 2023, 2:00). This quote emphasises the importance of receiving support from people during mental health challenges. Another episode states "The medical team has been there quite a while, so [athletes] are starting to feel really comfortable and actually saying how they feel" (Arsenal, 2023, 9:58). These examples depict how documentaries portray emotional safety and social support as a protective factor.

These variations in how affirmative framing is constructed across platforms reflect distinct functions of each media type. While all media types affirm the legitimacy of mental health struggles, YouTube and documentaries emphasise depth and resilience, online articles stress advocacy and

shared responsibility, and social media highlights visibility, emotional connection, and audience impact. These differences reinforce the research aim of exploring how media types shape the framing of mental health in elite athletes. The findings confirm that platform-specific affordances shape both the prominence and the function of particular frames.

4.2.2 Secondary Framing

Beyond the dominant presence of affirmative framing, secondary frames reveal further divergence between the media platforms. The second most common frame of each media type highlights how different formats prioritise personal narratives, systematic critique, or performance impact in nuanced ways.

Online news articles most frequently use critical and systematic framing as their secondary framing category (present in 90% of the 20 analysed units), particularly through performance pressure frames (11 of 20) and systematic struggle frames (7 of 20) (see Appendix A2.4, A2.5). Online articles tend to contextualise individual mental health issues within broader institutional issues and cultural expectations in sports (see Appendix A2.2). They often critique the lack of structural support, unrealistic demands, and cultural stereotypes within football.

For instance, Young (2024) quotes Miedema saying, "When I said I wasn't feeling so good and needed more time, I was told that I needed to train harder" (Young, 2024, para. 2). This depicts how mental health concerns are dismissed in favour of performance demands. Other articles emphasise the ongoing cultural stigma that discourages players from seeking help. Van Cleeff (2022) writes: "If you indicate that you need help, a coach will always look at you in a certain way" (Van Cleeff, 2022, para. 29). Similarly, other articles cite broader evidence of systematic issues. Young (2024) reports that "over 150 participants in the 2023 Women's World Cup expressed a deficiency in mental health support" (Young, 2024, para. 3). This situates Miedema's experience within a widespread institutional failure. These examples construct mental health as a structural issue which is rooted in football culture.

These representations in online articles construct mental health as a structural issue due to public expectations, competition demands, institutional flaws, and persisting stereotypes. This format tends to be sympathetic, criticising institutions and governing bodies, and demanding systemic reforms and changes in mental health policies. This reveals a noticeable lack of discussion of other reasons for mental health struggles outside of football.

Social media (6 of the 18 analysed units), YouTube interviews (5 of 5), and documentaries (3 of 5) most frequently use personal struggle and identity framing as their secondary framing category

(see Appendix A2.5). While this framing type appears across platforms, the emphasis within these varies.

YouTube interviews most commonly feature vulnerability (2 of 5) and personal responsibility (2 of 5) frames (see Appendix A2.4). The long-form, conversational nature of the platform allows for reflective accounts that normalise mental health challenges in elite sports. Vulnerability is expressed through statements like, "I think sometimes it's ok to [admit] it's been too much. I can't do it right now" (DAZN Women's Football, 2022, 1:54). This example acknowledges that athletes are not immune to mental health struggles. Other articles emphasise that athletes are expected to take personal initiative. For example, "I know myself now. I know when I need a break and say stop, it's enough, I need my time away." (JOE, 2023, 48:55), frames mental health management as an empowering individual decision.

Documentaries similarly emphasise personal responsibility framing (2 of 5) but place less emphasis on vulnerability (1 of 5) (see Appendix A2.4, A2.5). This format often presents mental health struggles as challenges that require awareness and self-management. In episode five, Miedema advises, "Allow yourself to take the time that you need, listen to your body." (Arsenal, 2023), framing mental health as a personal responsibility (Arsenal, 2023, 18:44). The focus on personal responsibility reflects the platforms' aim to engage viewers through emotionally compelling, individualised narratives that emphasise relatability and personal impact.

Personal struggle and identity framing on social media are often more simplified, and less nuanced. Mental health and identity frames are present in 6 of 18 analysed posts, commonly portraying Miedema's experiences with mental health as part of her identity (see Appendix A1.1, A2.4, A2.5). For instance, one comment states: "I respect [Miedema] not only as a player but also as a human being". This emphasises the importance of recognising an athlete's identity beyond sports (Lea, 2024).

These findings depict how secondary frames differ not only in frequency but also in tone and function across formats. This reinforces the need to assess framing practices in relation to medium-specific constraints and audience expectations.

4.2.3 Marginal Framing Patterns

Other frames such as performance-oriented framing or misrepresentative framing, appeared only minimally across formats (see Appendix A2.5). These were most present in online news and documentaries where performance consequences were occasionally foregrounded when reporting on Miedema's mental health struggles (see Appendix A2.2). Online articles additionally tended to

include statistical data on mental health. For instance, Young (2024) states: "36% of the participants exhibited symptoms indicative of eating disorders, while 11% showed moderate to severe symptoms of anxiety and depression" (Young, 2024, para. 3). Additionally, this format directly refers to mental health as medical conditions (e.g. depression, anxiety) and discusses them in a clinical, symptom-based way, emphasising the requirement for professional help rather than simply presenting personal experiences (see Appendix A2.2; Shephard, 2023). Misrepresentative framing was rare and largely appeared in trivialising social media comments and in online articles that included irrelevant additions or used dramatizing language when discussing mental health (see Appendix A2.5). For instance, Young (2024) states "Winning [...] marked the unfortunate turning point", to grasp the reader's attention (Young, 2024, para. 2).

The marginal nature of these frames indicates a general trend toward responsibility and contextualised coverage in most formats, although occasional sensational or reductive reporting still exists.

4.2.4 Cross Media Comparison Conclusion

The comparative analysis directly answered sub-research question 2, by revealing that while affirmative framing is prevalent across all media types, its frequency, style and emphasis differ significantly depending on the platform. Further, this section answered sub-research question 3 by demonstrating how different media types construct these frames according to platform-specific conventions. These differences reveal that each media type not only varies in how frequent certain frames are but also how they construct those based on platform specifics. Overall, this section revealed that platform-specific characteristics shape how Miedema's mental health struggles are framed.

4.3 Key Thematic Frames

This section builds on the comparison of how platforms construct and emphasise various frames. It examines underlying framing styles and broader patterns within the data units. It applies episodic vs. thematic and generic vs. issue-specific framing distinctions to analyse how Miedema's mental health is structured and communicated. These framing styles determine whether mental health is presented as an individual experience or as part of a broader societal or institutional problem. Additionally, they reveal whether the framing is specific to sports and mental health or applies to broader themes. By identifying these patterns, this section contributes to the study's aim of understanding how the media frames elite athletes' mental health.

This section specifically answers sub-research question 4 (How do media types differ in their use of

episodic versus thematic framing?) and sub-research question 5 (Which media types rely more on issue specific versus generic framing?).

4.3.1 Episodic vs. Thematic Framing

Episodic framing focuses on isolated events or personal experiences. Thematic framing connects these experiences to broader systemic issues or trends in sports or society (see Appendix A1.3).

Social media posts tend to be significantly more episodic (see Appendix A3.1, A3.3). For example, a post by Common Goal (2023) states, "Miedema shares what it has been like to go through panic attacks since the beginning of her career". This example draws attention to a specific symptom and moment without broader contextualisation. Similarly, in a TikTok posted by Dutch Meadema (2024), the interviewer asks: "How do you deal with those days when you come home, and you feel like you've got the weight of the world on your shoulders?" (Dutch Meadema, 2024, 0:45). This question centres on her individual emotional experience. While social media frequently uses personal narratives to increase engagement; documentaries, YouTube interviews, and online articles are prevalently thematic (see Appendix A3.1, A3.3). For instance, in The Athletic, Shephard (2023) quotes Miedema reflecting on cultural stigma around mental health: "Where I grew up, in the north of Holland, mental health or not being OK was not a 'done thing'. You had to be good. You had to enjoy things" (Shephard, 2023, para. 5). This example situates her experience within broader cultural and societal issues.

These findings directly answer sub-research question 4 by depicting that social media predominantly uses episodic framing while long-formats such as online articles, YouTube, and documentaries prevalently use thematic framing.

The predominance of episodic framing in social media tends to personalise and depoliticise mental health struggles, framing them as individual challenges rather than exploring them as outcomes of systematic pressures within elite sports. Thematic framing in long-form formats such as online articles, documentaries, and interviews provides a more contextualised, socially aware perspective. This supports Entman's notion that media functions vary depending on context and format and influence whether audiences are guided to see mental health as a societal issue or a personal experience.

4.3.2 Generic vs. Issue Specific Framing

Generic framing uses broader news frames such as human interest, conflict, or responsibility which can be applied to contexts beyond mental health or sports. Issue-specific framing addresses

sport or mental health-specific challenges such as performance pressure (see Appendix A1.3).

Overall, the media formats prevalently used issue-specific frames to report on Miedema's mental health (see Appendix A3.1, A3.3). Online articles, documentaries, and YouTube videos solely use this framing type. These platforms tend to have a deeper discussion, asking sports and mental health-specific questions such as "Have you ever felt that the culture of 'toughness' in sports conflicts with openly discussing mental health?" to present mental health struggles (LRI 10 23, 2025, para. 3). Social media is the online format that also utilises generic frames, particularly when the content is broader, emphasising overall well-being and happiness or general support towards Miedema (see Appendix A1.1, A3.1, A3.3). For instance, under a TikTok in which Miedema discusses mental health, the comments focus on her as a person and their admiration for her. These state for instance, "[...] that's so cute she's so sweet" or "so happy for you" (Lg.77x, 2025). These comments admire Miedema as a person or are happy for the creator to have received a message from Miedema, excluding the mental health-related context of the post.

These findings answer sub-research question 5 by revealing that long-form media types such as online articles, YouTube, and documentaries, consistently frame Miedema's mental health issue specific, thus in the context of elite sports. Contrary, social media combines both issue specific and generic frames. This format often emphasises general emotions, admiration, or public persona.

These findings suggest that most media formats use issue-specific framing to report on the complexities of mental health in elite sports. Long formats solely use this framing to create a more nuanced and context-sensitive discussion of mental health. Social media tends to simplify these discussions, generating general, emotionally driven responses that prioritise personal connection over deeper contextual understanding or awareness (see Appendix A1.1).

4.3.3 Key Thematic Frames Conclusion

This thematic analysis emphasises that media framing varies by platform, narrative structure, and emphasis. Social media tends to personalise and simplify mental health struggles through episodic and generic framing. This format often focuses on individual emotion and relatability. Conversely, long-form formats more frequently adopt thematic and issue-specific approaches. These platforms contextualise Miedema's experiences within broader cultural or sports-specific issues.

This section answered sub-research question 4 by revealing that social media relies more heavily on episodic framing, while the other media types predominantly use thematic framing. Sub-research question 5 is answered by revealing that online articles, YouTube interviews, and documentaries predominantly use issue specific frames. Social media uses both, issue specific and

generic frames. These framing differences emphasise that platform-specific conventions impact how issues are framed.

4.3.4 Intersection Between Framing Style and Category

The application of episodic/thematic and generic/issue-specific distinction reveals patterns that intersect with the broader framing categories which were introduced in section 4.1. These findings directly answer sub-research question 6 (How do episodic/thematic and generic/issue-specific framing styles intersect with the broader framing categories identified in the media coverage?). For instance, affirmative framing on social media is typically presented in an episodic and emotionally immediate manner. Contrary, in YouTube interviews and documentaries this category is commonly constructed as thematic and issue specific. Critical and systematic framing is presented thematic and issue specific. This reinforces its structural and institutional emphasis. Personal struggle and identity framing depicts more variations. On social media it is often presented episodic and generic. Contrary, in documentaries it is constructed more thematic and issue specific.

These findings suggest that framing categories and framing styles are not independent. They are commonly intertwined and influenced by platform logics and narrative conventions. Nonetheless, some exceptions exist. For instance, performance-oriented frames sometimes appear as thematic, especially in long-form discussions. Other times, especially when the unit emphasised a specific event such as a panic attack, this category is framed episodic. This suggests that framing styles influence the tone, depth, and direction of the framing category themselves.

4.4 Results Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has explored how Vivianne Miedema's mental health struggles are framed across various media types. Through the identification of five overarching framing categories and the application of Entman's (1993) four framing functions, the analysis demonstrates that affirmative framing is the most prevalent across all formats (p. 52). It is found that this frame is constructed differently depending on platform-specific characteristics. YouTube interviews and documentaries highlight depth, resilience, and support systems. Online articles emphasise advocacy and institutional responsibility and social media prioritises emotional connection and accessibility.

Secondary frames such as personal struggle and identity or critical and systematic framing also reveal clear platform distinctions. Long-form formats provide contextualised, thematic, and issue-specific coverage. This commonly links Miedema's experience to broader structural or cultural issues. Contrary, social media frequently uses episodic and generic approaches which personalise and simplify mental health struggles. These differences reflect each media type's narrative logic and engagement strategies. Moreover, the analysis revealed that framing categories and framing styles

often intersect. This suggests that how mental health is framed is closely tied to the stylistic conventions of each media type.

Although performance-oriented and misrepresentative frames are uncommon, their presence depicts that there remains tension in how mental health is portrayed. The coverage varies from supportive and understanding to more dramatizing or oversimplified approaches. Overall, the results confirm that media types play a decisive role in shaping how elite athletes' mental health is constructed, emphasised and understood. These findings directly support the study's aim by depicting how framing practices vary in frequency, function, tone, and depth.

5. Discussion

5.1 Main Findings

This study aimed to answer the central research question: How have different types of media framed Vivianne Miedema's mental health struggles between 2018 and 2025?

The answer to this question emerged from the comparative, cross-platform analysis. The findings reveal that different media platforms frame Miedema's mental health in distinct ways. These variations are influenced by platform logics and narrative conventions. Each chapter addressed a different sub-aspect of this overarching research aim. This chapter synthesises these findings to reveal how different aspects interconnect to generate new insights beyond the individual scope of the sub-research questions.

Overall, media platforms significantly differ in how they frame mental health. Social media predominantly employ episodic and generic frames. These platforms predominantly focus on personal emotions, admiration, and identity. This type of framing often centres Miedema as an individual person. This media type often celebrates her courage and emphasises her personal story without contextualising broader issues such as systematic pressures, which may influence her experiences. Social media posts are commonly emotionally immediate, and audience driven. These prioritise relatability over an extensive analysis.

In contrast, the findings reveal that long-form media types such as YouTube interviews, documentaries, and online articles tend to apply thematic and issue-specific frames. These formats explore Miedema's mental health struggles within the broader institutional and cultural themes of elite sports. These media types commonly address systematic issues such as pressures, stigma, and club responsibilities. These formats, for instance, consistently emphasise how sports culture impacts mental health struggles.

The analysis identified five overarching frame categories across all platforms: affirmative framing, personal struggle and identity framing, critical and systematic framing, performance-oriented framing, and misrepresentative framing. Among these, affirmative framing was the most prevalent. The tone and emphasis of this category varied by media type. Documentaries and articles portrayed affirmative framing through structural support or institutional recognition, while social media commonly emphasised emotional approval and fan solidarity.

By drawing connections across the sub-findings, the study found that the frame categories did not operate independently of framing styles. Thus, whether a unit is presented episodically or thematically and whether it is generic or issue specific. Framing category refers to the core concepts

of the media portrayal of mental health (e.g. emphasis on affirmative or performance). Framing style describes the narrative approach that is used to deliver the framing category. The intersection of framing category with framing style revealed that the depth and emphasis of each frame were shaped by platform-specific conventions. For instance, on social media personal struggle framing was episodic and emotionally simplified. Contrary, in interviews it was thematic, reflective, and contextualising. This finding reveals that framing category and style intersect. Thus, framing dynamics cannot be detached from media types and audience expectations.

Moreover, this study found that media representations of Miedema's mental health are normative. Framing guides audiences toward particular interpretations of what mental health struggles mean and who is responsible. Social media may foster empathy and destigmatisation on a personal level. However, its episodic framing may risk reducing mental health to individual sentiment rather than collective or institutional challenges.

Altogether, this study found that different media types frame Miedema's mental health struggles in systematically different ways. In combining framing theory with a mixed-method and platform-sensitive analysis, the study provides an answer to the research question and emphasises the need for critical awareness of how media types shape public interpretation of mental health in elite sports.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study offer valuable insights for applying framing theory in sports and media research. First, the results support the relevance of Entman's (1993) four framing functions; problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation, as an effective analytical lens for examining how mental health is constructed in media narratives (p. 52). When applying this theory across different media types, the functions enabled a systematic comparison of frames. This allowed to reveal the interpretation of how an issue is constructed across media types.

Second, the study affirms and extends the value of the by Iyengar (1991) and De Vreese (2005) introduced framing distinctions (episodic/thematic, generic/issue-specific) (De Vreese, 2005, p. 51; Iyengar, 1991, p. 2). Although these dimensions have been discussed, this study demonstrates how these styles intersect with broader frame categories and are influenced by the structural logic of the platform. For instance, episodic frames were more common on social media, while thematic frames appeared more frequently in long-format media types such as documentaries or YouTube interviews. Thus, frame categories and frame style are interdependent and influenced by platform characteristics such as audiences or length. This finding suggests that framing theory needs to be

more responsive to platform specific affordances. The predominance of episodic frames on social media may not solely reflect editorial choices but format specific demands such as algorithms, brevity, or the search for emotional immediacy. In contrast, long form media types enable for richer context and sustained narratives which is required for thematic framing. This raises questions about how media types shape messages (McLuhan, 1964, pp. 7-8). This finding encourages a dynamic application of framing theory that considers the influence and dynamics of media platforms.

Third, this study contributes to an under-researched area in framing theory, the intersection of gender, elite sports, and mental health. The case of Vivianne Miedema depicts that female athletes' mental health is framed differently across platforms. This suggests that framing theory must be adapted to platform-specific conventions when applied to contemporary sport contexts. This is especially relevant in women's football where media representations are still evolving.

Finally, the findings suggest that framing theory should be adapted when applied to contemporary media platforms. Especially social media platforms introduce new dynamics into the framing process. The prevalence of episodic and emotionally direct frames may reflect not only stylistic conventions but also evolving norms of communication and audience engagement. This aligns with van Dijck and Poell's (2013) findings that content and interaction are shaped by users, algorithms, and platform metrics (pp. 5-7). In this context, framing is no longer a solely journalistic activity. It is a distributed process which is shaped by metrics, popularity mechanisms, and user-platform interactions (Dijck & Poell, 2013, pp. 6-10). This indicates that framing theory must be extended beyond universal and fixed categories towards more nuanced, context and platform sensitive theoretical models.

5.3 Societal and Practical Implications

This study offers critical insights into athlete mental health, media ethics, and sports communication. In regard to mental health advocacy, this research emphasises the limitations of platform-dependent coverage. While personal and emotional social media posts may reduce stigma, they simultaneously reinforce individualised understandings of mental health struggles. These formats should thus be complemented by long-form media types which emphasise systematic support and accountability.

For media professionals and sports journalists, the findings advocate for a more balanced framing strategy. The overreliance on affirmative framing and celebratory aspects may conceal the depth of athletes' mental health struggles. Thus, aspects such as institutional failings or emotional pressures that come with professional sports may lack emphasis. Furthermore, journalists should critically evaluate the implications of episodic versus thematic framing and consider how these

choices shape the public's understanding of mental health in sports. Based on the findings, episodic framing tends to simplify mental health into personal and emotional resonate stories, while thematic framing offers deeper contextualisation by emphasising systematic issues such as institutional responsibility, stigma, and cultural pressures.

For audiences or fans, the study encourages a more reflective consumption of mental health narratives. For instance, audiences should be aware that the immediacy and intimacy of social media content may not reflect the structural realities of athletes.

5.4 Limitations and Further Research

Despite its contributions, this study shows limitations which lead to further research recommendations. While the sample size was strategically selected to depict variation and depth it remains limited. Especially the reduced number of social media posts may exclude relevant voices and contexts. The scarcity of posts specifically addressing Vivianne Miedema's mental health reflects the broader lack of public discourse and research in this area. The results depicted consistent themes across the available social media posts which suggests that there may not be significant variation. Nonetheless, a larger social media sample would have strengthened the comparative aspect and overall significance of the findings.

Another limitation is the exclusion of athlete self-framing. This decision was methodologically justified to focus on media framing. Nonetheless, including this could reveal further insights into how Miedema herself narrates her experience. Further research could include self-representation and how these strategies intersect with media narratives.

Moreover, an extended time frame could reveal long-term trends or shifts in framing strategies. This would also be of interest once Miedema retires to compare during and post career framing differences. It would be insightful to conduct a longitudinal study of athlete framing over the course of a career or an extended time frame. Potential research questions could examine: Do frames become more thematic over time? or What role does career stage play in shaping the media framing of an athlete's mental health?

Further, this study did not engage with audience reception or the impact of the identified frames. While the study reveals how mental health is framed it does not include how these frames are interpreted, received, or internalised by audiences. Further research could examine the reception side of media framing. Thus, investigate how different audiences such as fans, policymakers, or journalists interpret and respond to various frames. For instance, addressing research questions such as: Do episodic frames foster empathy or trivialise mental health issues in elite sports? or Do

thematic frames lead to greater understanding or disengagement?

Another limitation concerns the single case study. While Vivianne Miedema provides a unique, rich and well-covered example, her case is highly specific. Thus, the findings cannot be automatically generalised to athletes in other sports or from different countries. Mental health framing may be different for athletes in individual versus team sports or in less professional environments. Additionally, cross-cultural research would offer valuable insights. Assuming that media framing practices are shaped by national norms, journalistic cultures, and sports structures, analysing how Miedema's story is framed in Dutch, German, or American media could reveal significant variations in how gender, sports, and mental health intersect. Further research could conduct a comparative study which includes athletes across different sports or cultural contexts. This approach may reveal whether the framing patterns that were identified in this study are context-dependent or more universally applicable. Research questions such as: In what ways does cultural stigma around mental health shape the media framing of athletes in different national contexts? could be addressed.

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Appendix A

A1.1 Media Sample Overview

Sample of a total of 48 media units. Made up of 20 articles (over 300 words), 5 episodes of a documentary (122 minutes), 5 YouTube interviews (114 minutes), 18 Social Media Posts (10 Instagram, 8 TikTok).

The following colours were used for better readability: online News Articles, social media (Instagram), social media (TikTok), YouTube, documentary

Media Type	Source	Title	Date Published	Summary	Link
Online News Article	The Athletic Shephard, S.	Miedema and Mead in conversation: Arsenal stars discuss panic attacks and injury anguish	5.11.2023	Discusses Miedema's experience with mental health struggles, including panic attacks, and her experience with receiving professional help.	https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/5028122/2023/11/05/miedema-mead-mental-health/
Online News Article	The Standard Collings, S.	Create the Space: Ben Chilwell, Beth Mead and more football figures launch new mental health platform	02.11.2023	Common goal and popular footballers, including Vivianne Miedema, have launched a platform aimed at addressing mental health issues in football.	https://www.standard.co.uk/sport/create-the-space-mental-health-chilwell-mead-b1117655.html?utm
Online News Article	Daily Mail Batte, K.	Vivianne Miedema opens up on suffering from 'panic attacks' when she arrived at Arsenal in 2017 - but that struggle is motivating the Dutch star to help front a new player-led mental health movement	2.11.2023	Vivianne Miedema discusses experiencing panic attacks upon joining Arsenal in 2017, which inspired her to support a new player-led mental health initiative.	https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/football/article-12701321/Vivianne-Miedema-opens-suffering-panic-attacks-arrived-Arsenal-2017-struggle-motivating-Dutch-star-help-new-player-led-mental-health-movement.html
Online News Article	Sportnieuws.nl	'Thuis vaak alleen maar gehuild': Arsenal-spits Vivianne Miedema raakte mentaal helemaal uitgeput	16.03.2024	Miedema discusses mental health in regards to her injury. Feelings of isolation, frequent crying, and doubt. She found relief in opening up about her struggles. She is committed to advocating for mental health awareness.	https://sportnieuws.nl/voetbal/nieuws/thuis-vaak-alleen-maar-gehuild-arsenal-spits-vivianne-miedema-raakte-mentaal-helemaal-uitgeput-20240315165331857 83/?referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F
Online News Article	Helden. Van Cleef, M.	Vivianne Miedema: 'What you see is what you get'	31.05.2022	Miedema reflects on mental health struggles, challenges, societal struggles, and her past, reflecting on challenges during major events e.g.	https://www.helden.media/verhalen/vivianne-miedema-what-you-see-is-what-you-

				the world cup.	get/
Online News Article	Belfast Telegraph	Vivianne Miedema feeling refreshed by recent break	06.12.2022	Miedema discusses her decision to take a break for her mental health. The pressure to perform despite not feeling up for it mentally and physically.	https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/sport/football/vivianne-miedema-feeling-refreshed-by-recent-break/42199982.html
Online News Article	Women's Health. Van den Brand, M.	In gesprek met Vivianne Miedema: 'Op het moment dat je presteert, is de voldoening gigantisch'	21.07.2022	Article discusses Miedemas expectations for the Tokyo Olympics, the rise in women's football, and her biggest achievements and challenges.	https://www.womenshealthmag.com/nl/trainen/a35782874/vivianne-miedema-interview/
Online News Article	Gooner. Cardy, F.	"It's great when we have role models on the very top that speak about those situations": Jonas Eidevall discusses mental health after Beth Mead and Vivianne Miedema share their stories	03.11.2023	Discusses launch of "Create the Space", an initiative by Common Goal. Aimed at normalising mental health. Miedema shares her struggles with panic attacks, the importance of addressing mental health publically, not being 'ok', and highlighting the importance of seeking support.	https://www.onlinegooner.com/articles/view/it-s-great-when-we-have-role-models-on-the-very-top-that-speak-about-those-situations-jonas-eidevall-discusses-mental-health-after-beth-mead-and-vivianne-miedema-share-their-stories
Online News Article	AD. Miedema, V.	Column Vivianne Miedema	Wij topsporters zijn ook mensen hè, met onze eigen problemen	27.01.2022	Vivianne Miedema reflects on her evolving views on mental health. From dismissing psychological support to emphasising the importance of normalising therapy, criticising stigma and sharing her own struggles.	https://www.ad.nl/nederlands-voetbal/column-vivianne-miedema-wij-topsporters-zijn-ook-mensen-he-met-onze-eigen-problemen~ae02cc41/?cb=b414b0d4f599c477f5596953fda39c8a&auth_rd=1
Online News Article	Vrouwenvoetbal Nieuws. Benjmil, C.	Vivianne Miedema waarschuwt: "We moeten heel voorzichtig zijn"	15.03.2025	Miedema highlights the importance of mental health awareness.	https://www.vrouwenvoetbalnieuws.nl/vivianne-miedema-waarschuwt-we-moeten-heel-voorzichtig-zijn/
Online News Article	All Football.	Chilwell, Mead & other football figures open up on their mental health struggles	02.11.2023	The article discusses Common Goals mental health initiative and Miedema highlights cultural differences in mental health attitudes and her personal journey towards seeking support.	https://m.allfootballapp.com/news/EPL/Chilwell-Mead--other-football-figures-open-up-on-their-mental-health-struggles/3213838
Online News Article	The Times. Hudson, M.	Beth Mead and Vivianne Miedema on their shared path to recovery	15.12.2023	Discusses Arsenal's documentary about ACL recovery.Insights into their personal and professional lives and struggles they've faced.	https://www.thetimes.com/sport/football/article/beth-mead-viv-miedema-interview-couple-

					womens-world-cup-injuries-3rf5dhvwt
Online News Article	90 Min. Gallagher, J.	Beth Mead, Vivianne Miedema and Ben Chilwell join Common Goal's Create the Space initiative	02.11.2023	The article discusses Common Goals mental health initiative, and players (including Miedema's) call for advocacy	https://www.90min.com/posts/beth-mead-vivianne-miedema-and-ben-chilwell-join-common-goal-create-the-space-initiative
Online News Article	Sky Sports	Create the Space: Ben Chilwell and Beth Mead and other football figures open up on their mental health struggles as new platform launched	02.11.2023	The article discusses Common Goals mental health initiative, call for action, and Miedema's personal struggles and need for professional help.	https://www.skysports.com/football/news/11095/12998582/create-the-space-ben-chilwell-and-beth-mead-and-other-football-figures-open-up-on-their-mental-health-struggles-as-new-platform-launched
Online News Article	Sky Sports	Beth Mead and Viv Miedema: Arsenal duo discuss new docuseries Step by Step - a tale of loss, grief and recovery	25.12.2023 a	Discusses Miedemas journey with her ACL recovery and the accompanying struggles.	https://www.skysports.com/football/news/20876/13034039/beth-mead-and-viv-miedema-arsenal-duo-discuss-new-docuseries-step-by-step-a-tale-of-loss-grief-and-recovery?utm
Online News Article	Beyond the Pitch. Substack. Young, L.	Breaking Barriers: Mental Health in Women's Football	08.08.2024	Explores growing awareness and discussion of mental health in women's football. highlighting the role of athletes like Vivianne Miedema in breaking the stigma. It details Miedema's journey	https://beyondthepitch24.substack.com/p/breaking-barriers-mental-health-in
Online News Article	Daily Mail. Batte, K.	Vivianne Miedema opens up on 'really difficult' Arsenal exit after leaving behind her Lionesses partner Beth Mead to join rivals Man City	03.10.2024	Highlights Miedema's openness about experiencing panic attacks and anxiety, particularly in relation to lifestyle changes. She emphasises the importance of speaking openly about mental health and acknowledging the stigma. She frames her struggles as both personal and something that can inspire others. Despite the difficulties, she sees vulnerability as a strength.	https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/football/article-13920129/amp/Vivianne-Miedema-opens-really-difficult-Arsenal-exit-leaving-Lionesses-partner-Beth-Mead-join-rivals-Man-City.html
Online News Video (3:52)	BBC White, E. and Haines, B.	Vivianne Miedema opens up about the mental challenges of ACL recovery	13.03.2024	Discusses Miedema's mental health struggles, professional help and what she does when times get difficult.	https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0hjfxzv
Online News	Arsenal	Miedema discusses her	26.12.2023	The article discusses Miedema's comeback from injury and her	https://www.arsenal.com/news/miedema-

Article	Media	return from injury		advocacy for mental health.	discusses-her-return-injury
Online News Article	LRI 10 23	Eleventh Hour. In Conversation with Vivianne Miedema	24.01.2025	Article frames Miedema's mental health in a positive and empowering way, focusing on her role as a trailblazer, advocate, and resilient individual.	https://www.lri-1023.com/journal/eleventh-hour-viv
Social Media (Instagram)	@commongoalorg	Their turn to talk. Our turn to listen.	08.11.2023	Discusses Miedema's openness of suffering panic attacks, exhaustion, and mental health struggles.	https://www.instagram.com/p/CzYkbros5T_/
Social Media (Instagram)	@pitchnews.w	Vivianne Miedema opens up about the challenges of mental health in her interview with Daily Mail. Vulnerability is strength.	03.10.2024	Discusses Miedemas critique of how difficult it is to be open about mental health in society. She hopes to inspire others and feels a responsibility to make people feel less alone. She aims to break stigma and says that "you can struggle mentally and still be successful"	https://www.instagram.com/p/DArBvh9iGBb/?img_index=1
Social Media (Instagram)	@pitchnews.w	Vivianne Miedema is using her platform to raise mental health awareness with two powerful stories.	15.05.2024	The post discussed Miedema's advocacy for mental health, including a personal text of the creator and a video of Miedema.	https://www.instagram.com/p/C6__vKAihin/?img_index=1
Social Media (Instagram)	@commongoalorg	Everybody is going through their own mental health journey	10.10.2024	The post credits players who have spoken about their personal mental health journey. Among Miedema, quoting her "The proudest moment of my career so far was to take care of myself and look after my mental health"	https://www.instagram.com/p/DA8cwx3MDv2/?img_index=2
Social Media (Instagram)	@viviannemiedema	Just because Mental Health Awareness Month is over, doesn't mean we're done	04.06.2024	Miedemas post discusses the importance of normalising the discussion of mental health struggles, to find joy in little things and reach out for help. The post received significant, positive engagement.	https://www.instagram.com/viviannemiedema/p/C7y5v0Po69p/?img_index=1
Social Media (Instagram)	@viviannemiedema	Just a (not so) subtle reminder to take care of your mental health every day	11.09.2024	Miedemas posts remind people to take care of their mental health every day. The post received significant, positive engagement.	https://www.instagram.com/viviannemiedema/p/C_x9rSuIMpK/?img_index=1
Social Media (Instagram)	@viviannemiedema	Thank you, to the people that are there for me. (Seriously)	10.10.2023	Miedema reflects on the ups and downs of mental health. She encourages self-care and reminds people that support is always available. She emphasises seeking help when needed.	https://www.instagram.com/viviannemiedema/p/CyOmiQ9I3cd/?img_index=1
Social Media (Instagram)	@meadema_football	@viviannemiedema talking about mental health and leaving	04.10.2024	Post discusses Miedema's move to another club, the accompanying anxiety, the importance of being honest and open about mental	https://www.instagram.com/meadema_football/p/DAtMgd8Cn

		Arsenal after 7 years		health but also the difficulties people experience trying to do so.	AU/
Social Media (Instagram)	@common goalorg	We asked some of our members what they'd like to see football do more of in 2025	09.01.2025	The post is a screenshot of Miedema emphasising that there must be more spaces for people to be open and safe in regards to mental health and a reminder to check in with your loved ones.	https://www.instagram.com/p/DEnBHSOs_d3/?img_index=3
Social Media (Instagram)	@lri.1023	ELEVENTH HOUR by LRI1023 In conversation with @viviannemiedema	24.01.2024	The post discusses Miedema as a mental health advocate. Emphasising her inspiration for change, resilience, authenticity, and balance.	https://www.instagram.com/lri.1023/p/DFOLk8PMz_0/?img_index=1
Social Media (TikTok)	@paige_buckets_	Okay First Beth and then Viv. #viviannemiedema #manchestercity #netherland #swysh	02.03.2025	Miedema sends a personal message to the creator discussing her mental health struggles, and things she does to deal with it. She says she is proud of her for keeping on going and there is a light at the end of the tunnel.	https://www.tiktok.com/@paige_buckets_/video/7477211356152827158
Social Media (TikTok)	@rosiedawson.14	I know i'm a day late but mental health is important every day	11.10.2023	Creator posts a video of Miedema encouraging you to speak openly about your mental health struggles and to take breaks when needed to be a better player.	https://www.tiktok.com/@rosiedawson.14/video/7288716027670580513?q=miedema%20mental%20health&t=1742049440347
Social Media (TikTok)	@woso_awfc123	The best #fyp #womensfootball #barclayswsl #awfc #viviannemiedema #bethmead #mentalhealth	01.06.2024	Creator posts a video of Miedema explaining how she deals with her mental health struggles (e.g. journaling and being open/talking about her struggles to people)	https://www.tiktok.com/@woso_awfc123/video/7375450901898677537?q=miedema%20mental%20health&t=1742049440347
Social Media (TikTok)	@loxn.120	Viv when she opend up about the world cup 2015 and her mental health.#viviannemiedema #mentalhealth #foryou	29.10.2023	Creator posts a video of Miedema talking about her mental health struggles (e.g. motivation, eating, stress, performance pressure).	https://www.tiktok.com/@loxn.120/video/7295367831397436704?q=miedema%20mental%20health&t=1742049440347
Social Media (TikTok)	@lg.77x	Your my reason viv #fyp #viviannemiedema #vivianne #netherlands #mancity #viral	13.02.2025	Miedema sends a personal message to the creator discussing that most people go through difficult times, to give yourself a reason to keep going everyday.	https://www.tiktok.com/@l.g07x/video/7470859008434359574?is_from_webapp=1&sender_device=pc&web_id=7482044149270119958
Social Media (TikTok)	@arsenalwfc	We asked the team for their favourite Taylor Swift song	12.09.2023	Miedema mentions mental health struggles ('Out of the woods' because I was depressed and that helped me out of it') as well as a teammate mentioning how one of the songs has changed Miedema's	https://www.tiktok.com/@arsenalwfc/video/7277988065619037473?lang=en

				life. "	
Social Media (TikTok)	@womensg amemib	"I would always advise players to stand up for themselves." Thank you, Vivianne Miedema for your bravery in advocating for mental health & leading by example.	03.07.2024	Miedema discusses being brave enough to set boundaries for her mental health.	https://www.tiktok.c om/@womensgame mib/video/73875147 30019147039
Social Media (TikTok)	@dutchme adema	part of viv's interview with football daily, whole podcast on Spotify. #bethmeadandvivianne miedema	14.03.2024	Miedema discusses mental challenges of injury recovery and how she deals with difficult days.	https://www.tiktok.c om/@dutchmeadem a/video/7346194001 319513377?is_from_ webapp=1&sender_d evice=pc&web_id=74 82044149270119958
YouTube (Interview) 1:09:22	YouTube, JOE	Vivianne Miedema On FIFA UEFA Greed, Women's World Cup, Panic Attacks & Relationship With Beth Mead	13.07.2023	The interview discussed Miedema's struggles with anxiety, panic attacks and depression. Additionally, it discusses football culture, stigma, and her success story.	https://www.youtub e.com/watch?v=8YX_ 6taAr8c
YouTube (Interview) 0:32	YouTube, The Women's Game	Viv Miedema on protecting her mental health	03.07.2024	Miedema is speaking up about being a mental health advocate and to ask for her and have boundaries.	https://www.youtub e.com/watch?v=XAZS f5OPn-c
YouTube (Interview) 2:32	YouTube, DAZN Women's Football	Vivianne Miedema & Jonas Eidevall Open Up On Mental Health Break: 'People Expect Miracles From Her'	07.12.2022	Miedema and her coach discuss her personal mental health struggles and a manager's point of view in an interview.	https://www.youtub e.com/watch?v=UAiU h1UdWkw
YouTube (Interview) 7:17	YouTube, NOS Sport	Injured Miedema at home: ´I am more than a football player´	NOS Sport	09.04.2023	Discusses Miedema's lead up to her ACL injury and recovery.	https://www.youtub e.com/watch?v=tpNl LtKyuXQ
YouTube (Interview) 34:05	YouTube, The Women's Game	VIVIANNE MIEDEMA on leaving Arsenal, being a Swiftie, and her next big career move │ Friendlies	03.07.2024 a	Discusses Miedema's bravery and inspiration in terms of her openness in regards to mental health struggles.	https://www.youtub e.com/watch?v=Kv4R LQ9j6Do
Documentar y (5 episodes. 122 minutes)	Arsenal	Step By Step	2023	The documentary follows Beth Mead and Vivianne Miedema on their recovery from an ACL injury.	https://www.arsenal. com/video/women/s tep-step- playlist?entryid=0_dh wzs26d

A1.2 Analytical Instrument for Identifying and Analysing Codes

This table shows the analytical instrument that was used to systematically analyse all selected media units. For each unit, the frames/codes were defined and analysed using Entman's (1993) four framing functions, an example was provided, and the source was recorded (p. 52).

Code/Frame	Problem Definition	Causal Interpretation	Moral Evaluation	Treatment Recommendation	Example Code Criteria/Example Indicator	Article Source
Name of Frame (e.g. Supportive Framing)	What issue is being presented as the problem.	What is seen as causing the problem? Who or what is blamed?	How is the issue evaluated? What values or moral judgements are expressed?	What solutions or changes are proposed or implied?	Direct quote or description from the unit.	Author, date, media type

A1.3 Analytical Instrument for Identifying Episodic/Thematic and Generic/Issue-Specific Frames

To determine whether media units employed episodic or thematic framing, and whether they used generic or issue-specific frames, the following criteria were used. Mention the source

Episodic vs. Thematic Framing

Guiding Question	Indicator of Episodic Framing	Indicator of Thematic Framing
Does the unit focus on a specific event or match?	Yes	No
Is the framing centred on Miedema's individual experience or emotions?	Yes	No
Does the unit lack discussion of broader structural or systemic issues?	Yes	No
Is the story contextualised within wider trends or systemic patterns in sport or society?	No	Yes

Generic vs. Issue-Specific Framing

Guiding Question	Indicator of Generic Framing	Indicator of Issue-Specific Framing
Could this framing apply to issues beyond sport (e.g., politics, economy)?	Yes	No

Does the unit employ standard news frames such as conflict, human interest, or responsibility?	Yes	No
Is the framing adapted to the specific context of elite sport or mental health in athletes?	No	Yes
Does the unit reference sport-specific stressors, pressures, or cultural norms?	No	Yes

A2.1: Code List

An overview of all the codes used in the analysis.

Initial Framing Codes	Overarching Framing Categories
Supportive Framing	Affirmative Framing
Role Model Framing	Critical/Systematic Framing
Stigma-Breaking Framing	Performance-Oriented Framing
Resilience Framing	Personal Struggle and Identity Framing
Support Systems	Misrepresentative Framing
Performance Pressure	
Vulnerability	
Systematic Struggles	
Personal Responsibility Framing	
Medicalised Framing	
Performance-Centred Framing	
Mental Health and Identity	
Sensationalised/Dismissive Framing	
Individualised Struggles	
Stigmatising Framing	

A2.2: Framing Codes

Main coding table with definitions and examples.

The following colours were used for better readability: online News Articles, social media (Instagram), social media (TikTok), YouTube, documentary

Code	Problem Definition	Causal Interpretation	Moral Evaluation	Treatment Recommendation	Examples	Articles
Supportive Framing	Presents mental health struggles as a legitimate and important concern that requires discussion. It emphasises understanding, encouragement, and the necessity of visibility in mental health discourse. Miedema's struggles are framed as part of a broader conversation about athlete well-being rather than as personal weakness or controversy.	Portrays Miedema's mental health struggles with empathy and understanding, reducing stigma by normalising mental health discussions. By framing her experiences as important and relatable rather than as a weakness/ scandal, the media fosters awareness and encourages public conversation. Supportive framing reassures audiences that mental health challenges are valid and that seeking help is acceptable.	Presents Miedema's openness as admirable and valuable. Reinforcing idea that speaking out is a positive and necessary action. Miedema's advocacy is viewed positively/nec essarily, reinforcing the importance of open conversations about mental health/support ive figures. Promotes the idea that supporting athletes' mental health is beneficial/ essential.	Advocates for systemic change, more mental health resources. Encourages open discussion about mental health. Continued public conversatio ns are seen as essential to normalising mental health struggles/ fostering a culture of reassurance and support.	"Through my own experience, I know how hard it can be... But talking about it is difficult, even for me." [Translated]. (Sportnieuws.nl, 2024).

"Everybody needs support." (Sky Sports, 2023).

Frames her break as a rational, necessary decision, rather than failure. "We came to the conclusion that it's better for me to just take a bit of time off" (DAZN Women's Football, 07.12.2022)

"In your own words rather than putting them in your mouth." "Has it helped? Are you more happy?"// acknowledging the bravery of speaking about her mental health struggles (JOE, 2023)

Validates her decision: "I think you're setting such a great example for the next generation." (The Women's Game, 03.07.2024a)

The comment expresses gratitude, reinforcing the idea that sharing personal struggles can have a positive effect. (@viviannemiedema, 11.09.2024)

The phrase "you are such an inspiration" frames Miedema as a positive force in mental health awareness. // You will get through it " directly encourages and uplifts Miedema. (@viviannemiedema, 10.10.2023)

"Wishing her the best in this stage of her career and life" expresses encouragement and support. (@meadema_football, 04.10.2024)

The phrase "love Viv's the most" suggests strong support for her stance on mental health awareness. (@commongoalorg, 09.01.2025)

The deep gratitude expressed suggests that Miedema's presence and message have | Sportnieuws.nl (2024).

AllFootball (2023).

Gallagher (2023).

Sky Sports (2023).

Young (2024).

DAZN Women's Football (07.12.2022).

JOE (2023).

The Women's Game (03.07.2024a).

@viviannemied ema (11.09.2024).

@viviannemied ema (10.10.2023).

@meadema_fo otball (04.10.2024).

@commongoal org (09.01.2025).

@lri.1023 (24.01.2024).

@commongoal org (10.10.2024).

@pitchnews.w (15.05.2024).

@pitchnews.w (03.10.2024).

@commongoal org (08.11.2023).

@paige_bucket s_ (2025).

@rosiedawson. 14 (2023).

@woso_awfc12 |

					provided emotional support. (@lri.1023, 24.01.2024) The comments affirm the importance of conversations of mental health (@commongoalorg, 10.10.2024) "It's not easy to expose yourself to the world this way" acknowledges the difficulty of public vulnerability and frames it as brave. (@pitchnews.w, 15.05.2024) "Helped me more than she can ever realize" expresses deep appreciation and emotional support. // You can't give her enough praise" strongly affirms the importance of mental health advocacy. @pitchnews.w, 03.10.2024) "Very important" "It is so needed" "It will change lives" Emphasises the importance of visibility in mental health discussions.(@commongoalorg, 08.11.2023) "She sent me one too and honestly it's helped me so much" (@paige_buckets_, 2025). Comments (e.g.: "Bless her she deserves the world") express emotional support and sympathy.(@loxn.120, 2023) "Love this" (@dutchmeadema) "We do need to start protecting players which is also the reason that I started speaking up." Media highlights her advocacy for player welfare. (Ep. 5) // "I do think it's a lot about communication and creating that open environment." Media acknowledges communication as key. (Ep.3) (Arsenal, 2023)	3 (2024). @loxn.120 (2023). @lg.77x (2025). @dutchmeade ma (03.07.2024). Arsenal (2023). Episode 3. Episode 5.
Stigmatisi ng Framing	Athletes face barriers to address mental health due to societal norms. Cultural stigma. Athletes face criticism when talking about mental health. Mental health is seen as a weakness.	Hesitance to seek professional help because mental health is not openly discussed. Football culture discourages open discussion about mental	Negative impact of stigma on athletes' willingness to seek support. Stigmatising mental health struggles is harmful. Idea that top athletes must always be	Normalising mental health conversatio ns would help others feel more comfortable seeking help/should be normalised. Downplayin	Commentator argues that mental health too much talked about, and people should stop talking about it so much (@commongoalorg, 08.11.2023) "There's a big thing in the science medicine world where they're saying no we shouldn't ask players this because they lie they don't tell the truth." Media presents scepticism	@commongoal org (08.11.2023). Arsenal (2023) Episode 3

	Mental health remains a taboo subject in football. Media suggests that players' mental health struggles are a weakness.	health. Fear of judgement because of social media. A lack of open discussion and structural support perpetuates stigma. Athletes are expected to push through difficulties.	mentally strong is unrealistic and damaging. Breaking the silence is crucial for change. Struggles should be minimised to maintain performance	g issues, discouraging discussion.	toward athletes' honesty about mental struggles. (Ep. 3) (Arsenal, 2023)	
Sensationalised or Dismissive Framing	Mental health in sports is too widely discussed. Mental health as a dramatic or scandalous issue. Success is framed as a dramatic trigger for mental health decline. Media portrays Miedema's struggles as dramatic and shocking.	Individual struggles overhyped for clicks and views. Miedema's openness is not groundbreaking since other athletes have addressed similar issues. Achievements in football are portrayed as directly worsening anxiety. Mental health issues are linked to crisis moments.	Dismissive. Implying that mental health discussions in sports are now common rather than revolutionary. Dramatic shift.	This frame often lacks clear solutions. Avoid linking success too simplistically to mental health struggles. Focusing on the drama rather than solutions.	"Winning the UEFA European Championships marked the unfortunate turning point" (Young, 2024). Article slightly dramatizes her struggles by emphasising her panic attacks and anxiety while also referencing an emotional connection to her dog. Adds an emotional angle to her departure, making her struggles feel more relatable and engaging for readers. "Miedema leaving Arsenal was also difficult for Myle, the puppy she shares with Mead." (Batte, 2024). The phrase "nothing new" implies that the topic has been widely covered before. (@commongoalorg, 08.11.2023)	Young (2024). Batte (2024). @commongoal org (08.11.2023)
Performance-Centred Framing	Mental health as an obstacle to success. Mental health is often viewed in relation to how it affects performance rather than as a standalone concern.	The focus is on maintaining mental balance to continue performing at a high level. The culture in professional football prioritises physical performance over well-being. Psychological distress impacts an athlete's ability to train and compete.	Neutral to negative, more focused on performance impact than personal well-being. Athletes' ability to rest and reset rather than deeper struggles. Implies that players are sometimes expected to push through mental struggles instead of receiving proper care. Mental struggles can	Recover quickly, stay mentally tough. Shift the focus towards a more holistic view of player well-being.	"when I said I wasn't feeling so good and needed more time, I was told that I needed to train harder." (Sky Sports, 2023) "Her panic attacks often left her physically and mentally drained for days, sometimes unable to partake in training or even get off the sofa." (Miedema's struggles affecting training) (Young, 2024) The mention of "switching off" reinforces the link between mental health and athletic recovery. (@commongoalorg, 08.11.2023) "We feel like that could have had a big impact on our injury." Media implies that mental struggles directly affect injuries. (Ep. 3) // "The single risk factor from a	Sky Sports (2023). Sky Sports (2023a). Young (2024). @commongoal org (08.11.2023). Arsenal (2023) Episode 3

			be seen as hindrances to performance.		psychological point of view is stress or history of stress." Scientific framing reinforces performance risks. (Ep. 3) (Arsenal, 2023)	
Performance Pressure	Expectations and performance pressure impact mental health negatively. Athletes feel immense pressure to perform, often at the cost of mental well-being. Athletes are often expected to push through struggles. Media highlights the pressure placed on Miedema to perform.	Stress from public expectations (media, fans, clubs). Competition demands. Football culture often prioritises physical over mental health. Sporting environments emphasise resilience over mental well-being. Young players are burdened with high expectations.	Mixed, sometimes sympathetic, sometimes dismissive. Performance pressure dismissed as part of the job. Ignoring mental health can have long-term negative consequences. Pressure can be harmful but is also part of the sport.	Athlete responsibility vs. better workload management. Psychological support. Mental health should be treated with the same importance as physical health. Learning to manage expectations.	"when I went to the 2015 World Cup i[…] I was then touted out of nowhere into the hope of the country. You can be really tough as a person, but the pressure just became too much for me." [Translated] (Miedema, 2022). Miedema discusses how, in Germany, she was told to "train harder" instead of addressing her mental health. (AllFootball, 2023) "when I said I wasn't feeling so good and needed more time, I was told that I needed to train harder." (Young, 2024) Miedema acknowledges that the sports industry expects toughness, making it harder for athletes to prioritise mental well-being. Example: "Have you ever felt that the culture of 'toughness' in sports conflicts with openly discussing mental health?" (LRI 10 23, 2025) Frames professional sport as an environment where athletes often push themselves beyond what is necessary or healthy. (Arsenal Media, 2023) Article connects physical exhaustion and injury with mental strain, showing how overwork and expectations can lead to burnout, reinforcing the idea that mental health struggles are tied to career demands. (Shephard, 2023) External stressors in football lead to self-doubt, affecting athletes' confidence and mental well-being. Reinforces the idea that elite sports environments contribute to internalised pressure, leading athletes to question their own abilities. (White, 2023) "What do you expect? I was compared to Lionel Messi." (van Cleef, 31.05.2022)	Miedema (2022). AllFootball (2023). Young (2024). LRI 10 23 (2025). Arsenal Media (2023). Shepherd (2023). White (2023). Hudson (2023). Van Cleef (31.05.2022) Van den Brand (21.07.2022). Belfast Telegraph (06.12.2022). DAZN Women's Football (07.12.2022). JOE (2023). Arsenal (2023) Episode 4

					Acknowledges unrealistic expectations placed on athletes, portraying the pressure to always deliver as unfair and unsustainable "People are just expecting miracles" (DAZN Women's Football, 07.12.2022) Emphasises how early success brought immense pressure on Miedema. Mental health struggles as a consequence of high expectations from media, fans, pressure as an external factor. "All the media were like, oh Miedema is going to help us win the world cup, which was unrealistic anyway" (JOE, 2023) "I was only 18 when we qualified for the World Cup in 2015, and people expected me to help Netherlands win the World Cup although I was still very young." Framed as unfair expectations placed on a young player. (Ep. 4) // "Pressure has definitely been something that has played a big part in my career so far." Media emphasises pressure as a recurring theme in her career. (Ep. 4) (Arsenal, 2023)	
Resilience Framing	Recognising her ongoing battle with mental health struggles. Mental health struggles are challenging but can be endured with strength and perseverance. Overcoming mental health struggles is a significant personal achievement.	Recognising her ongoing battle with mental health struggles. Miedema's ability to navigate tough times demonstrates her inner strength. Seeking help, support from others, and self-care are key to resilience. Players who take care of their mental health demonstrate strength and resilience.	Positive, inspirational. Framing her as someone who persists despite difficulties. Miedema's resilience is admired, reinforcing the idea that overcoming struggles is a mark of personal strength. Athletes should be encouraged to take care of their mental well-being. Framing mental health recovery as an empowering journey.	Encourages professional help, peer support, continued persistence and self-acceptance. Normalise seeking help and viewing mental health management as a strength rather than a weakness.	Miedema considering her proudest career moment to be prioritising her mental health (AllFootball, 2023) (Sky Sports, 2023) "Despite managing her mental health better now, Miedema acknowledged the on-going support she relies on." (Young, 2024) While acknowledging her struggles, the article also presents Miedema as someone who finds strength through her challenges. "But it's been really nice to have a fresh start and I've been really enjoying it. As a player and as a person I needed that." (Batte, 2024) Highlights Miedema's ability to overcome challenges and grow stronger from them rather than just focusing on her struggles. "Probably that somehow, I am capable of surviving almost everything. There have been so many extremely tough moments I've managed to come back from."	AllFootball (2023). Sky Sports (2023). Young (2024). Batte (2024). LRI 10 23 (2025). Arsenal Media (2023). Shepherd (2023). van Cleef (31.05.2022). DAZN Women's Football (07.12.2022). JOE (2023). The Women's Game (03.07.2024a). @viviannemied

						Rather than portraying Miedema as a victim, the article presents her as someone who navigates difficulties with strength (LRI 10 23, 2025)	ema (04.06.2024).
							@viviannemiedema (10.10.2023).
						Highlights the mental strength required for elite athletes to recover from setbacks. (Arsenal Media, 2023)	@meadema_football (04.10.2024).
						Portrays Miedema's decision to seek help as one of her proudest moments, emphasising personal growth and perseverance. "Probably the proudest moment of my career so far is making that step: to actually take care of myself, take care of my mental state and not just the physical state. "Reframes mental health not as weakness, but as a necessary part of being an elite athlete. (Shephard, 2023)	Arsenal (2023) Episode 5
						"It's good that I hit that wall and started talking about my feelings." Frames her mental health journey as a story of success, despite persisting challenges. (van Cleef, 31.05.2022)	
						Suggests that stepping away from football temporarily is ultimately a strategy for long-term success rather than a sign of weakness "I need some time for myself. To then become a better player" (DAZN Women's Football, 07.12.2022)	
						Presents Miedema's mental health management as an ongoing process that requires adaptation and self-awareness "I've been working with a psychologist for five, six years now and trying to just be as open as I can be to see if that would help me be a better player, but mostly be more happy off the pitch." mental health struggles don't just disappear, but can be managed over time (JOE, 2023)	
						"Viv was so incredible, I'm so struck by her maturity and awareness around mental health." (The Women's Game, 03.07.2024a)	
						"Thank you for giving me strength, Viv." (@viviannemiedema,	

Personal Responsibility Framing	Focuses on individual self-care rather than external pressures. Individuals have a responsibility to recognise and manage their mental health struggles. Individuals must manage their own mental health. Media frames mental health as Miedema's personal responsibility.	Mental health as an athlete's personal duty. Recognising personal struggles is key to improvement. Success depends on self-management.	Encourages self-management. Seeking help is framed as an important, self-empowering decision. Athletes must take initiative.	Self-reliance, mental toughness, discipline. Encourages others to take ownership of their mental health journey. Encouraging self-awareness and self-care .	Quotes / Examples	Sources
					04.06.2024) The phrase "the fact that you are still here just shows how strong you really are" reinforces a resilience narrative. (@viviannemiedema, 10.10.2023) "Change is difficult to accept and adapt to" acknowledges the struggles of change while implying that overcoming them is possible. (@meadema_football, 04.10.2024) "Make sure that you're in an environment where you're comfortable and you feel like you can push yourself." Framed as a key lesson from struggles. (Ep. 5) (Arsenal, 2023)	
Personal Responsibility Framing	Focuses on individual self-care rather than external pressures. Individuals have a responsibility to recognise and manage their mental health struggles. Individuals must manage their own mental health. Media frames mental health as Miedema's personal responsibility.	Mental health as an athlete's personal duty. Recognising personal struggles is key to improvement. Success depends on self-management.	Encourages self-management. Seeking help is framed as an important, self-empowering decision. Athletes must take initiative.	Self-reliance, mental toughness, discipline. Encourages others to take ownership of their mental health journey. Encouraging self-awareness and self-care .	Discusses Miedema saying "Sometimes I still need to tell Beth, 'keep chatting to me, because I do feel really stressed." (Young, 2024) "It still took a year before I admitted: I think I might need you after all…" Suggests that while mental health support is available, athletes must take the initiative themselves. (van Cleef, 31.05.2022) Players should take control over their mental health, standing up for themselves, rather than waiting for external support. "I would always advise players to stand up for themselves," (The Women's Game, 03.07.2024) Frames Miedema's recovery as requiring individual action. "I know myself now. I know when I need to break and say stop—it's enough, I need my time away." Emphasises that while external pressures exist, athletes must also take responsibility for their mental health by recognising their limits. (JOE, 2023) The commenter states that Miedema taught them the importance of self-care, suggesting an individual's role in managing their well-being. (@viviannemiedema, 10.10.2023)	Young (2024). van Cleef (31.05.2022). The Women's Game (03.07.2024). JOE (2023). @viviannemiedema (10.10.2023). @arsenalwfc (12.09.2023). Arsenal (2023) Episode 3 Episode 5

					"Lotte saying she loves out of the woods cause it changed vivs life" Miedema's struggles in a compassionate and understanding way, showing how external support (in this case, from a teammate) acknowledges her experience and its impact. (@arsenalwfc, 12.09.2023) "Allow yourself to take the time that you need, listen to your body." Media presents her as advocating self-care. (Ep. 5) // "Nine out of ten times if I wouldn't be physically or mentally ready, I would actually pull myself out of things, but then that very last time that you're not doing it, that's when you get injured." Frames injury as a result of mental struggles as partly her responsibility. (Ep. 3) (Arsenal, 2023)	
Support Systems	Focuses on the role of clubs, teammates, and professionals in supporting mental health. Emphasises community support. The presence (or absence) of mental health support in football impacts players' well-being. Strong social bonds are crucial for well-being. Media acknowledges the importance of team and medical support.	Mental health care as a shared responsibility. Social support as a protective factor. Access to professional help and cultural attitudes towards mental health influence an athlete's experience. Separation from teammates and fans contributes to emotional distress. Trust enables athletes to seek help.	Generally positive, highlighting progress. Appreciation and collective backing and reassurance. Players should have better access to mental health support. Support systems provide comfort and stability. Clubs and teammates play a role in well-being.	Advocates for mental health support in sports organisations. Appreciation and emotional encouragement. Increase the availability and normalisation of mental health professionals in football. Maintaining relationships and finding new sources of support. Encouraging communication and resources.	The goal is to have volunteers available to all players, providing a safe space for conversations around mental health. (Collings, 2023) "Everybody needs support." (Sky Sports, 2023) Arsenal providing psychological support (Young, 2024) The article emphasises the emotional difficulty of Miedema's transition, particularly her struggles with change and uncertainty. "I think the hardest bit was leaving the girls and the fans. You appreciate the people you've spent a lot of time with over the last couple of years." (Batte, 2024) Emphasises the importance of having the right people around her as a way to maintain mental well-being. "I understand now that I need the right people around me to manage life and football and that I can't and don't need to do it all alone." (LRI 10 23, 2025) Emphasises the importance of external support in managing mental health, portraying Miedema as someone who benefits from advice from those close to her. "Thankfully	Collings (2023). Sky Sports (2023). Young (2024). Batte (2024). LRI 10 23 (2025). Arsenal media (2023). Shepherd (2023). White (2024). Hudson (2023). JOE (2023). @viviannemiedema (04.06.2024). @pitchnews.w (15.05.2024). Arsenal (2023) Episode 3 Episode 4

					I've got some really special people in my life telling me I need to be a little nicer on myself." (Arsenal Media, 2023) Highlights the role of personal relationships in managing and normalising mental health challenges in elite sport. (Shephard, 2023) Highlights the importance of seeking help and finding the right people to talk to in dealing with mental health struggles. "I've managed to find the right people around me. I've obviously been speaking to someone." Reinforces the idea that seeking professional and personal support is essential for managing mental health challenges. (White, 2024) Presents support systems as a crucial for managing mental health struggles and highlighting Miedema's journey towards seeking help "I just need people around me that can hello me along the way" Seeking support as a necessary step (JOE, 2023) "We love and appreciate you so much." (@viviannemiedema, 04.06.2024) "She saved my life" directly attributes the commenter's survival to Miedema's influence (@pitchnews.w, 15.05.2024) "The medical team has been there quite a while, so I feel like the girls that have been around longer are starting to feel really comfortable and actually saying how they feel." Media frames this as a positive team dynamic. (Ep. 3) // "Along the way I started realizing that if I would let people help me, I would start feeling better about it." .(Ep. 4) (Arsenal, 2023)	
Vulnerability	Emphasises struggle. Athletes are not immune to mental health struggles. Media acknowledges emotional and	Mental health as an ongoing issue. Struggles can make athletes feel isolated.	Concern for ongoing struggle. Normalising vulnerability is crucial. Accepting vulnerability is part of the	Normalise mental health discussions in football. Talking about mental health as a	"The proudest moment of my career so far was to take care of myself and look after my mental health." (Batte, 2023). "At a certain point, you start doubting your own physicality... Is this worth it?"	Batte (2023). Sportnieuws.nl (2024). Young (2024). Batte (2024).

	psychological challenges.		process.	coping mechanism. Encourages honest conversations. Encouraging honesty and seeking help. This frame often lacks clear solutions.	(Sportnieuws.nl , 2024). Discussion of Miedema's panic attacks "Her panic attacks often left her physically and mentally drained for days." (Young, 2024) The article emphasises the emotional difficulty of Miedema's transition, particularly her struggles with change and uncertainty. "That has been really difficult and that still is really difficult and that might always stay really difficult." (Batte, 2024) The article allows Miedema to express uncertainty and difficulty without framing it as a weakness. Example: "Sometimes I don't have. It is definitely something that has improved over the years. I think I've always put a lot of pressure on myself." (LRI 10 23, 2025) Article acknowledges that, despite her advocacy, Miedema still struggles with mental health and finds it difficult to talk about. "Honestly, it's not easy for me to speak about these things either because it's something I'll probably struggle with for the rest of my life." Frames mental health as an ongoing challenge rather than a temporary issue, which adds emotional weight to the discussion. (Arsenal Media, 2023) Portrays Miedema as open about her struggles, detailing how panic attacks left her physically and mentally drained. "An attack would leave her physically and mentally exhausted for days. She would miss training sessions, unable to raise herself from the sofa." Creates empathy and relatability, showing the human cost of mental health struggles in professional athletes. (Shephard, 2023) "During the European Championship in 2017, I suffered from panic attacks. On the football field, when I was at home, wherever." open about her past struggles (van	LRI 10 23 (2025). Arsenal Media (2023). Shepherd (2023). van Cleef (31.05.2022). DAZN Women's Football (07.12.2022). JOE (2023). Arsenal (2023) Episode 5

				Cleef, 31.05.2022) Normalises acknowledging personal limits, challenging the expectation that top athletes must always push through "I think sometimes it's ok to just be like it's been too much. I can't do it right now". (DAZN Women's Football, 07.12.2022) Acknowledges her bravery for asking for help and breaks when she needs them "taking breaks for your mental health because you know particularly within sport [...] everyone's looking for a weakness in their opposition and I'm sure at times to be able to even just suggest and say mentally I need a break [...] that must be a hard thing in and of itself." (JOE, 2023) "It's not as straightforward as you think... there are many different issues that you go through." Framed as an acknowledgment of struggles. (Ep. 5)(Arsenal, 2023)	
Mental Health and Identity	Frames mental health as part of the athlete's identity/ influence, and public image. An athlete's identity extends beyond their performance, their personal experiences, (including mental health struggles), shape who they are. Mental health is a crucial aspect of identity and well-being, not just a side issue. Idea that footballers should not be reduced to their athletic performance.	Miedema's advocacy and openness have shaped how she is viewed, not just as a footballer but also as someone who contributes to mental health awareness. Acknowledging Miedema as more than just a footballer, recognising her humanity and the challenges she faces. Pressure of being seen only as an athlete may contribute to struggles with mental health.	The framing suggests that her struggles, rather than diminishing her, have added depth to her public identity. Respecting athletes as whole individuals (not just for their performance) is seen as valuable. Open discussions about mental health shape how athletes are perceived beyond their performance. recognising athletes as whole individuals is important for their well-being.	Encourage open discussion/ public discourse that acknowledg es mental health as a fundamenta l part of an athlete's identity. Encourages a holistic view of athletes that includes their mental well-being, life changes, and personal growth. Encourage continued visibility and conversatio ns about mental health in public spaces.	The commenter sees Miedema's openness as a defining and valuable trait, reinforcing that athletes can be more than just their on-field performance (@viviannemiedema, 11.09.2024) "I respect this woman not only as a player but also as a human being" highlights the importance of recognising an athlete's identity beyond sports. (@meadema_football, 04.10.2024) "She learned to not only look after her body but also after her mind" emphasises the integration of mental health into an athlete's identity (@pitchnews.w, 15.05.2024) "Important to get out there" suggests that mental health should be part of the public discourse. (@commongoalorg, 08.11.2023) "I am also a person" NOS (2023)	@viviannemied ema (11.09.2024). @meadema_fo otball (04.10.2024). @pitchnews.w (15.05.2024). @commongoal org (08.11.2023). NOS (2023)

Individual Struggles	Frames mental health as a personal issue/battle.	Individual responsibility. Internal struggles. Personal challenge (e.g. moving abroad at a young age, high expectation, being overwhelmed (Miedema, 2022))	Individual perseverance/ responsibility.	Personal coping.	Miedema describes crying at home, questioning whether she wants to return, and feeling mentally drained but ultimately finding support in sharing her experience. (Sportnieuws.nl , 2024). Discusses Miedema's personal experience and triggers (Young, 2024) Highlights Miedema's personal challenges and coping mechanisms, showing how she navigates mental health issues on her own. Frames mental health as a personal journey, emphasising self-awareness and individual strategies to manage struggles (LRI 10 23, 2025) Emphasises the emotional toll of Miedema's experiences, portraying her struggles as deeply personal. "Mentally it's just draining [...] the amount of times that we came home and I just cried the rest of the day was incredibly high." (White, 2024)	Sportnieuws.nl (2024). Young (2024). LRI 10 23 (2025). White (2024)
Systematic Struggles	Frames mental health as part of a broader system. Institutional support is lacking in women's football.	Institutional flaws (e.g., clubs, federations). Football's governing bodies have not prioritised mental health.	Criticising the system. Systematic change is needed.	Systemic reforms. Implement structural reforms in mental health policies.	"just train harder" mentality in Germany (Batte, 2023). Need to move from talking about mental health to taking action (Collings, 2023) Miedema explained that, in the Netherlands, discussing mental health "just wasn't done" (AllFootball, 2023). "Over 150 participants in the 2023 Women's World Cup expressed a deficiency in mental health support." // "Make it as accepted and normal as possible to struggle mentally." (Young, 2024) Critiques the lack of institutional support for mental health in football, highlighting the need for structural changes. "Every club should have a psychology department, in which clinical and team psychology should be present." Shifts responsibility onto clubs and governing bodies, suggesting that systemic improvements are necessary to support athletes properly. (LRI 10 23, 2025)	Batte (2023). Collings (2023). AllFootball (2023). Young (2024). LRI 10 23 (2025). Shepherd (2023). Van Cleef (31.05.22). DAZN Women's Football (07.12.2022). JOE (2023)

					Highlights cultural barriers to seeking help, particularly in Dutch and German football environments where mental health was dismissed. "In Munich, it wasn't about how you were feeling at all. The coach told me, 'You need to train harder because then you'll forget about things.'" Frames football as a high-pressure, emotionally repressive environment, making it difficult for players to seek mental health support. (Shephard, 2023) Critiques football culture for its failure to fully support players' mental health needs. "There is progress, but it is not yet how it should be. If you indicate that you need help, a coach will always look at you in a certain way." (van Cleef, 31.05.2022) Hints at structural issues in elite football, particularly the lack of adequate rest periods for players. "Once you've been doing this for 8 or 9 years without having a proper break, you start feeling it". (DAZN Women's Football, 07.12.2022) Mentions broader structural issues in football, including how mental health struggles can be used against players. "We need to start creating a safer environment everywhere for people to say, 'I'm not okay,' or 'I do need help.'" Frames mental health challenges as not just individual struggles, but problems rooted in football culture, media expectations, and lack of systemic support. (JOE, 2023)	
Medicalis ed Framing	Mental health struggles should be treated equally to physical injuries. Mental health is framed through clinical diagnoses. Media presents mental health issues in medical terms.	Psychological conditions, rather than personal or social ones. Medical assessment determines mental health conditions. Stress and injuries affect psychological health.	Neutral to empathetic. Seeking professional help should be seen as a sign of strength, not weakness. Professional care is essential.	Athletes should be encouraged to seek professional treatment, therapy, counselling. Football clubs should employ psychologist s as a standard resource. Using	"I have been using a psychologist for years now… And no, I'm not ashamed of it at all. In fact, I would recommend it to everyone." "Now I think it's ridiculous if a club doesn't employ a psychologist." (Miedema, 2022). "36% of the participants exhibited symptoms indicative of eating disorders, while 11% showed moderate to severe symptoms of anxiety and	Miedema (2022). Young (2024). LRI 10 23 (2025). Shepherd (2023). Van Cleef (31.05.2022). JOE (2023).

| | | | | | research and medical interventions. | depression." (Young, 2024)

Miedema critiques the lack of mental health resources in football, suggesting clubs should integrate psychology departments. "Every club should have a psychology department, in which clinical and team psychology should be present." (LRI 10 23, 2025)

Introduces panic attacks in a clinical, symptom-based way, emphasising their physical and debilitating effects. Frames Miedema's experiences as a medical condition, reinforcing the seriousness of mental health in elite sport. (Shephard, 2023)

"At the World Cup in Canada in 2015, I had a lot of stress and suffered from migraines. In those few weeks, I lost six kilos."// "After six months, a new woman came, I had a good feeling about her. That was the first step." Reinforces the seriousness of mental health struggles by linking them to physical symptoms. (van Cleef, 31.05.2022)

References to panic attacks, depression, and therapy. Mental health as a clinical issue requiring professional help rather than just a personal mindset shift (JOE, 2023)

"The single risk factor from a psychological point of view is stress or history of stress." Scientific framing of mental health risk. (Ep. 3) (Arsenal, 2023) | Arsenal (2023) Episode 3 |
| Role Model Framing | Mental health struggles need to be openly discussed. Players speaking up about mental health can inspire others. Mental health struggles are seen as a challenge that, when spoken about openly, can help others. Public figures can have a | Generational shifts and lack of openness have made it difficult for athletes to address mental health. Visible leadership from high profile athletes helps break the silence around issues. Public | Praises public figures for leading the conversation. Public figures have an impact in shaping the future of the game. Brace and necessary for players to speak out despite potential backlash. Her openness is perceived as positive and | Encouraging open discussions and using role models to reduce stigma. Encouraging continued advocacy. Encourages more athletes to speak out about mental health to inspire and support | "It's great when we have role models on the very top that speak about those situations." (Cardy, 2023).

"The proudest moment of my career so far was to take care of myself and look after my mental health." (advocate for self-care and openness). (Batte, 2023).

"I have been using a regular psychologist for years now. [...] And no, I'm not ashamed of it at all" [Translated] (Miedema, 2022).

Miedema speaks about her | Cardy (2023).

Batte (2023).

Miedema (2022).

Benjmil (2025).

Gallagher (2023).

Young (2024).

Batte (2024).

LRI 10 23 (2025). |

	profound impact on individuals struggling with mental health. Importance of representation in mental health. High-profile footballers are stepping up as advocates for mental health. Media presents Miedema as a leader in mental health advocacy.	acts of resistance can empower other players and set an example for future generations. Miedema's willingness to share her experiences has contributed to reducing stigma and making mental health discussions more accessible. Players with lived experiences can drive change through their visibility and leadership. Public figures can drive change.	beneficial, positioning her as a role model. Miedema is framed as a deeply influential and inspirational figure, someone whose words and actions have had a direct positive effect. Athletes have a responsibility to use their platform to promote mental well-being. Speaking out is valuable and admirable. Speaking up benefits future generations.	others. Athletes should continue using their platforms to advocate for mental health awareness. Encouraging footballers to speak out and lead initiatives like "Create the Space." Encouraging athletes to use their platforms to advocate for social issues. Encouraging openness and leadership.	own mental health and the importance of other players feeling empowered to do the same. (Benjmil, 2025). "Bartrip, Chilwell, Mead, Miedema, and Sordell have called on athletes, clubs and football stakeholders to join Create the Space." (Gallagher, 2023). "She's more than a record breaker but also a vocal advocate." (Young, 2024) Portrays Miedema as someone who uses her platform to help others by openly discussing her struggles. Frames her as a leader in breaking the stigma, encouraging athletes to speak up "Miedema believes it is important she, and others in football, speak openly about mental health and share how they are feeling." (Batte, 2024) Positions Miedema as a leader and advocate for mental health, presenting her as someone who breaks stigmas and uses her platform to help others. "From winning the Euros on home soil to becoming a global advocate for mental health, Viv's journey is defined by resilience, authenticity, and the pursuit of balance." This positions Miedema as an inspiring figure, making mental health advocacy a core part of her identity. (LRI 10 23, 2025) Presents Miedema as someone using her platform to drive social change. "With my status and who I am, I can use my platform to inspire a couple of kids or adults to take care of themselves." (Arsenal Media, 2023) Miedema is framed as a leader in shifting attitudes towards mental health in football, particularly for younger generations. "Your mental health is the very first thing to actually being a footballer and being successful. So take care of that first." (Shephard, 2023) Video suggests that Miedema's openness resonates with others, helping people feel seen and understood. (Interviewer: "Have you felt that as well that	Arsenal Media (2023). Shepherd (2023). White (2024). The Women's Game (03.07.2024). NOS Sport (2023). The Women's Game (03.07.2024a). @viviannemiedema (04.06.2024). @viviannemiedema (11.09.2024). @viviannemiedema (10.10.2023). @lri.1023 (24.01.2024). @pitchnews.w (15.05.2024). @pitchnews.w (03.10.2024). @commongoal org (08.11.2023). @paige_buckets_ (2025). @loxn.120 (2023). @lg.77x (2025). Arsenal (2023) Episode 4

					people are saying thank you for speaking out [...] I feel heard, I feel that's me.") Frames Miedema as a public figure who inspires others to acknowledge and discuss their own struggles. (White, 2024) Presents Miedema as one of the few players brave enough to take a stand, her actions set an example for others. Portrays her as a pioneer in athlete mental health advocacy. (The Women's Game, 03.07.2024) "Miedema has grown into a player who speaks her mind about sensitive subjects." Portrayed as a player who uses her platform to address important issues, reinforcing her influence beyond football. (NOS Sport, 2023) "Viv was so incredible, I'm so struck by her maturity and awareness around mental health." (The Women's Game, 03.07.2024a) "incredible role model, incredible human" "You'll always be my role model" (@viviannemiedema, 04.06.2024) "Made mental health easier to talk about! So grateful for that!! thank you for speaking out viv you've helped me so much" (@viviannemiedema, 11.09.2024) Commenters credit Miedema with her decision to seek professional help and reinforce her impact (@viviannemiedema, 10.10.2023) The phrase "saved my life" suggests that Miedema's advocacy has been life-altering. (@lri.1023, 24.01.2024) The phrase "Viv shows the world" frames her as an influential figure shaping public discourse on mental health. // "She saved my life" directly attributes the commenter's survival to Miedema's influence. (@pitchnews.w, 15.05.2024) The commenter credits Miedema's openness with	

					helping them personally. (@pitchnews.w, 03.10.2024) "Inspiring" and "keep doing what you do" reinforce admiration for Miedema's approach. // "Amazing role model". // "Seeing someone you look up to talk so openly" "So proud" (@commongoalorg, 08.11.2023) "my inspiration" // "You are an inspiration Viv to many people." (@paige_buckets_, 2025) "She's a huge inspiration to me" (@loxn.120, 2023) "This is why she is one of my favourites" // "not only a great player but a great person too." (@lg.77x, 2025) "It is our responsibility to look after one another and we have done." Framed as a collective effort among players.// "We are the generation right now that needs to up the standard for the next generation." Her responsibility to inspire change. (Ep. 4) (Arsenal, 2023)	
Stigma-Breaking Framing	There is still stigma around mental health which is making it difficult to speak openly. Mental health struggles should be openly discussed and addressed in football.	Miedema's openness challenges societal norms that discourage discussing mental health. Players speaking out can help challenge long-standing stigmas. Public figures speaking out can help others feel less alone and encourage recovery.	Miedema's actions are seen as courageous and necessary for change. It is beneficial when high-profile athletes discuss mental health issues. It is valuable when athletes use their platforms to promote awareness and reduce stigma.	More athletes and public figures should follow her example to normalise mental health discussions. Encourage open discussions and initiatives like 'Create the Space' to normalise conversations about mental well-being. Importance of athletes sharing their experiences to help others. Open discussions and visible	Anyone can be "mental health champion," challenges the stigma around discussing mental well-being in football and encourages open conversation (Gallagher, 2023) "Where I grew up in the north of Holland, it just wasn't OK to talk about mental health, it just wasn't done.". "Even then I still wasn't sure if I should, as it had never been OK to address my mental health." (Batte, 2023). "It just wasn't OK to talk about mental health… but now I see that taking care of myself was my proudest moment." (Sky Sports, 2023) "When Ricardo Kishna and Gregory van der Wiel talked about their anxiety attacks, they got a lot of comments on social media." "We need to get rid of the idea that you shouldn't show your weaknesses. It's nothing to be ashamed of." [Translated]. (Miedema, 2022)	Sky Sports (2023). Batte (2023). Gallagher (2023). Miedema (2022). Batte (2024). LRI 10 23 (2025). Arsenal Media (2023). White (2024). The Women's Game (03.07.2024). DAZN Women's Football (07.12.2022). JOE (2023). The Women's Game

| | | | | | role models can provide hope and support for those struggling. | Acknowledges that mental health is still a taboo subject in football and highlights Miedema's efforts to challenge that. "It's something that, especially in football and society, that's not openly spoken about."(Batte, 2024)

The article reinforces that mental health in football is still not fully accepted but presents Miedema as someone working to change that. "The stigma partly comes from how mental health is portrayed in the media. Why is it seen as something negative? Why is it not OK to NOT be OK?" (LRI 10 23, 2025)

Article positions mental health as an overlooked issue in football and society, with Miedema playing a part in shifting the conversation. "Mental health has always been something I've tried to talk about openly... it's something that historically gets swept under the carpet." (Arsenal Media, 2023)

Frames Miedema as someone who has consistently spoken out about mental health, despite the difficulty in doing so. "I have always been speaking out about mental health. And through my own experience I know how difficult it can be to be okay." Key figure in normalising mental health discussions, both for athletes and the general public. (White, 2024)

Reinforces the idea that mental health remains a stigmatised issue in football and society, but Miedema is actively working to change that."It is something that not just in football but also in society is a massive issue and there is a stigma around it." (The Women's Game, 03.07.2024)

Video pushes back against the idea that taking a break is a sign of weakness, instead presenting it as an essential part of sustaining elite performance "Take your time, allow yourself to struggle or not feel good. Try and take your break." (DAZN Women's Football, 07.12.2022) | (03.07.2024a).

@pitchnews.w (03.10.2024).

@loxn.120 (2023).

@arsenalwfc (12.09.2023).

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					"Mental health is still such a big issue. It's something that you don't really want to be open about or speak about too much because it can be used against you." Miedema as an advocate for breaking stigma while acknowledging the existing culture of silence and fear in football (JOE, 2023)	
					"I'm so glad to hear that you are part of moving this towards a place where there's less stigma around talking about it." (The Women's Game, 03.07.2024a)	
					The emphasis on "being so open" highlights the rarity and importance of Miedema's actions in breaking stigma. (@pitchnews.w, 03.10.2024)	
					"[...] it helps so much when people with a bigger platform speak out on it and show that you shouldn't have to go through things alone or that's there's like an end to it and that you can get better bc it is the worst thing to have to go through" @loxn.120 (2023)	
					"Viv [Miedema] is so me" identification with her struggles, potentially normalising discussions about mental health by showing how others relate to her experience (@arsenalwfc, 12.09.2023)	
					"When we speak about it being World Mental Health Month, we always say we need to check in on one another." Promoting awareness. (Ep. 4) (Arsenal, 2023)	

A2.3: Overarching frame categories

Depicts overarching framing categories that developed out of the initial framing codes (A2.1).

Overarching Framing Categories	Description	Included Sub-Frames
Affirmative Framing	Frames that validate mental health as real and important, encouraging support, openness, and resilience.	Supportive Framing, Resilience Framing, Role Model Framing, Support Systems, Stigma-Breaking Framing

Critical/Systematic Framing	Frames that critique systemic or cultural failures in supporting athletes' mental health.	Systematic Struggles, Stigmatising Framing, Performance Pressure
Performance-Oriented Framing	Frames that relate mental health as a factor in maintaining performance and physical readiness, often emphasising functionality over well-being.	Performance-Centred Framing, Medicalised Framing
Personal Struggle and Identity Framing	Frames that explore mental health as a deeply personal or identity-based concern, often emphasising humanity.	Vulnerability, Mental Health and Identity, Individual Struggles, Personal Responsibility Framing
Misrepresentative Framing	Frames that prioritise drama or engagement, often lacking nuance or depth in portraying mental health.	Sensationalised or Dismissive Framing

A2.4: Frequency of Framing Categories

Depicts which codes are the most common for the different types of media (A2.1). For the documentary the episodes the code was presented in were counted.

Code	Online News Articles	Social Media (Instagram)	Social Media (TikTok)	Social Media Total	YouTube	Documentary	Total
Supportive Framing	5 (20%)	9 (90%)	6 (75%)	15 (83%)	3 (60%)	2 (40%)	26
Role Model Framing	11(55%)	7 (70%)	3 (37.5%)	10 (56%)	3 (60%)	1 (20%)	25
Stigma-Breaking Framing	8 (40%)	1 (10%)	2 (25%)	3 (17%)	5 (100%)	1 (20%)	17
Resilience Framing	8 (40%)	3 (30%)		3 (17%)	3 (60%)	1 (20%)	16
Support Systems	9 (45%)	2 (20%)		2 (11%)	1 (20%)	2 (40%)	15
Performance Pressure	11(55%)				2 (40%)	1 (20%)	14
Vulnerability	8 (40%)				2 (40%)	1 (20%)	11
Systematic Struggles	7 (35%)				2 (40%)		9
Personal Responsibility Framing	2 (10%)	1(10%)	1 (12.5%)	2 (11%)	2 (40%)	2 (40%)	8

	Online News Articles	Social Media (Instagram)	Social Media (TikTok)	Social Media Total	YouTube	Documentary	Total
Medicalised Framing	5 (25%)				1 (20%)	1 (20%)	7
Performance-Centred Framing	3 (15%)	1 (10%)		1 (5%)		1 (20%)	5
Mental Health and Identity		4 (40%)		4 (22%)	1 (20%)		5
Sensationalised/Dismissive Framing	2 (10%)	1 (10%)		1 (5%)			3
Individual Struggles	4 (20%)						4
Stigmatising Framing		1 (10%)		1 (5%)		1 (20%)	2

A2.5: Frequency of overarching frame categories

Depicts which overarching frame categories are the most common for the different types of media (A2.2). The table depicts how many times the frame category was counted and the percentage and number of mentions of the category per unit on average.

Overarching Frames	Online News Articles	Social Media (Instagram)	Social Media (TikTok)	Social Media Total	YouTube	Documentary	Total
Affirmative Framing	41 (205% (2.05))	22 (220% (2.2))	11 (138% (1.38))	33 (183% (1.8))	15 (300% (3))	8 (160% (1.6))	99
Personal Struggle and Identity Framing	14 (70% (0.7))	5 (50% (0.5))	1 (13% (0.13))	6 (33% (0.3))	5 (100% (1))	3 (60% (0.6))	28
Critical/Systematic Framing	18 (90% (0.9))	1 (10% (0.1))		1 (5%)	4 (80% (0.8))	2 (40% (0.4))	25
Performance-Oriented Framing	8 (40% (0.4))	1 (10% (0.1))		1 (5%)	1 (20% (0.2))	2 (40% (0.4))	12
Misrepresentative Framing	2 (10% (0.1))	1 (10% (0.1))		1 (5%)			3

A3.1: Episodic vs Thematic Framing and Generic vs Issue-Specific Framing

Depicts which articles are episodic vs. thematic and generic vs. issue specific.

Media Type	Source	Date Published	Thematic / Episodic	Generic / Issue-Specific
Online News Article	The Athletic (Shephard, S.)	5.11.2023	Thematic	Issue-Specific
Online News Article	The Standard (Collings, S.)	02.11.2023	Thematic	Issue-Specific
Online News Article	Daily Mail (Batte, K.)	2.11.2023	Thematic	Issue-Specific
Online News Article	Sportnieuws.nl	16.03.2024	Episodic	Issue-Specific
Online News Article	Helden. (Van Cleef, M.)	31.05.2022	Thematic	Issue-Specific
Online News Article	Belfast Telegraph	06.12.2022	Episodic	Issue-Specific
Online News Article	Women's Health. (Van den Brand, M.)	21.07.2022	Episodic	Issue-Specific
Online News Article	Gooner. (Cardy, F.)	03.11.2023	Thematic	Issue-Specific
Online News Article	AD. (Miedema, V.)	27.01.2022	Thematic	Issue-Specific
Online News Article	Vrouwenvoetbal Nieuws. (Benjmil, C.)	15.03.2025	Thematic	Issue-Specific
Online News Article	All Football.	02.11.2023	Thematic	Issue-Specific
Online News Article	The Times. (Hudson, M.)	15.12.2023	Episodic	Issue-Specific
Online News Article	90 Min. (Gallagher, J.)	02.11.2023	Thematic	Issue-Specific
Online News Article	Sky Sports	02.11.2023	Thematic	Issue-Specific
Online News Article	Sky Sports	25.12.2023a	Thematic	Issue-Specific
Online News Article	Beyond the Pitch. Substack. (Young, L.)	08.08.2024	Thematic	Issue-Specific
Online News Article	Daily Mail. (Batte, K.)	03.10.2024	Thematic	Issue-Specific
Online News Video (3:52)	BBC (White, E. and Haines, B.)	13.03.2024	Episodic	Issue-Specific

Online News Article	Arsenal Media	26.12.2023	Episodic	Issue-Specific
Online News Article	LRI 10 23	24.01.2025	Thematic	Issue-Specific
Social Media (Instagram)	@commongoalorg	08.11.2023	Episodic	Issue-Specific
Social Media (Instagram)	@pitchnews.w	03.10.2024	Thematic	Issue-Specific
Social Media (Instagram)	@pitchnews.w	15.05.2024	Thematic	Issue-Specific
Social Media (Instagram)	@commongoalorg	10.10.2024	Thematic	Issue-Specific
Social Media (Instagram)	@viviannemiedema	04.06.2024	Thematic	Issue-Specific
Social Media (Instagram)	@viviannemiedema	11.09.2024	Thematic	Generic
Social Media (Instagram)	@viviannemiedema	10.10.2023	Thematic	Issue-Specific
Social Media (Instagram)	@meadema_football	04.10.2024	Episodic	Issue-Specific
Social Media (Instagram)	@commongoalorg	09.01.2025	Thematic	Generic
Social Media (Instagram)	@lri.1023	24.01.2024	Thematic	Generic
Social Media (TikTok)	@paige_buckets_	02.03.2025	Episodic	Issue-Specific
Social Media (TikTok)	@rosiedawson.14	11.10.2023	Thematic	Issue-Specific
Social Media (TikTok)	@woso_awfc123	01.06.2024	Episodic	Issue-Specific
Social Media (TikTok)	@loxn.120	29.10.2023	Episodic	Issue-Specific
Social Media (TikTok)	@lg.77x	13.02.2025	Episodic	Generic
Social Media (TikTok)	@arsenalwfc	12.09.2023	Episodic	Generic
Social Media (TikTok)	@womensgamemib	03.07.2024	Thematic	Issue-Specific

Social Media (TikTok)	@dutchmeadema	14.03.2024	Episodic	Issue-Specific
YouTube (Interview) 1:09:22	YouTube, JOE	13.07.2023	Thematic with strong Episodic Frames	Issue-Specific
YouTube (Interview) 0:32	YouTube, The Women's Game	03.07.2024	Thematic	Issue-Specific
YouTube (Interview) 2:32	YouTube, DAZN Women's Football	07.12.2022	Thematic with Episodic Frames	Issue-Specific
YouTube (Interview) 7:17	YouTube, NOS Sport	09.04.2023	Episodic	Issue-Specific
YouTube (Interview) 34:05	YouTube, The Women's Game	03.07.2024a	Thematic	Issue-Specific
Documentary (Episode 1)	Arsenal	2023	Episodic hinting at the Thematic nature of the entire series.	Issue-Specific
Documentary (Episode 2)	Arsenal	2023	Thematic with Episodic Frames	Issue-Specific
Documentary (Episode 3)	Arsenal	2023	Thematic with Episodic Frames	Issue-Specific
Documentary (Episode 4)	Arsenal	2023	Thematic with Episodic Frames	Issue-Specific
Documentary (Episode 5)	Arsenal	2023	Thematic with Episodic Frames	Issue-Specific

Note: The documentary uses episodic framing to overall discuss and frame thematic issues.

A3.3: Frequency of Episodic vs Thematic Framing and Generic vs Issue-Specific Framing

Depicts how common Episodic vs Thematic Framing and Generic vs Issue-Specific are for the different types of media.

Media Type	Episodic	Thematic	Generic	Issue-Specific
Online News Articles	6 (30%)	14 (70%)		20 (100%)
Social Media	8 (80%)	2 (20%)	3 (30%)	7 (70%)

(Instagram)				
Social Media (TikTok)	6 (75%)	2 (25%)	2 (25%)	6 (75%)
Social Media Total	14 (78%)	4 (22%)	5 (28%)	13 (72%)
YouTube	1 (20%)	4 (80%)		5 (100%)
Documentary	1 (20%)	4 (80%)		5 (100%)
Total	22	26	5	43