


# Integrating Digital Marketing Analytics and Product Innovation: A Conceptual Model for Customer Acquisition and Business Growth in Sports Enterprises

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**Abstract**
Sports enterprises such as fitness operators, sports management firms, academies, event organisers and sports technology providers are under growing pressure to acquire customers efficiently and grow profitably in markets that have been reshaped by digital media, mobile commerce and changed consumer expectations after the COVID-19 pandemic. Two capabilities are widely cited as sources of advantage in this environment: digital marketing analytics, which converts customer and campaign data into insight, and product innovation, which converts insight into new or improved offerings and experiences. In practice, however, these capabilities are frequently managed in separate silos, so that analytics teams optimise campaigns for products that customers do not value, while product teams innovate without reliable evidence about demand. Using a conceptual, model-building design based on an integrative literature review, this paper addresses that gap by developing a conceptual model that integrates the two capabilities through an Insight-to-Innovation Loop, a set of shared data assets, cross-functional routines and iterative experiments that link market evidence to offering design.
Drawing on the resource-based view, dynamic capabilities theory, market orientation and service-dominant logic, together with literature on marketing analytics and sport innovation, the paper proposes eight propositions. The model argues that analytics capability and product innovation capability each contribute to the integration loop and reinforce each other; that the loop improves customer acquisition performance (reach, conversion, acquisition cost) and business growth (revenue, customer lifetime value, retention); that acquisition outcomes mediate part of the growth effect; that performance data feed back into analytics to create a self-reinforcing cycle; and that sports-specific contingencies, including seasonality, event cycles, consumer digital readiness and resource constraints, moderate these relationships. The paper translates the model into a measurement framework, a key performance indicator architecture and a phased implementation roadmap suitable for small and medium-sized sports enterprises in emerging markets such as Nigeria. It closes with theoretical, managerial and policy implications, a discussion of limitations and an agenda for future empirical research.

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background

Sport has become one of the most commercially dynamic sectors of the global economy. Beyond elite leagues and broadcast rights, a large and fast-growing segment of the industry consists of sports enterprises that sell participation, wellness and experience: gyms and fitness studios, corporate wellness providers, sports academies, recreational leagues, event and race organisers, athlete and talent management firms, and sports technology platforms. These organisations compete for the attention,

time and discretionary spending of consumers who now discover, evaluate and purchase services largely through digital channels (Agyei *et al*., 2019; Kannan & Li, 2017; Okafor *et al*., 2021; Verhoef *et al*., 2021) [12, 47, 66, 113].

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this shift. Lockdowns forced fitness and sports businesses to move programmes online, introduce home-workout content, adopt app-based booking and payments, and rely on social media to stay connected with members (Ratten, 2020) [79]. In emerging markets such as Nigeria, where smartphone adoption, mobile money and social media usage have expanded rapidly among urban, young and health-conscious consumers (Oteri & Chibwaye, 2022) [72], the pandemic also exposed how unevenly sports enterprises were prepared to use data and digital tools. Many firms increased their digital advertising spending without a corresponding increase in their ability to measure what that spending achieved, or to use what they learned to improve the products they were selling (Sanni *et al*., 2020a) [87].

Two organisational capabilities stand out in the literature as levers for acquisition and growth under these conditions. The first is digital marketing analytics: the ability to collect, integrate and analyse data from websites, social platforms, search, email, mobile apps and transaction systems in order to understand customers and optimise marketing decisions (Basnet *et al*., 2021; Germann, Lilien & Rangaswamy, 2013; Wedel & Kannan, 2016) [28, 40, 114]. The second is product innovation: the ability to create new or improved offerings, services and experiences that deliver superior value to customers (Agyei, 2021; Funk, 2017; Oluwo *et al*., 2022; Ratten, 2016) [10, 39, 69, 78]. Each has been studied extensively. Far less attention has been given to how the two capabilities should be combined, particularly in sport, where the product is often an intangible, co-created experience rather than a physical good.

A growing body of scholarship from Nigeria, Ghana and other emerging markets has begun to examine these capabilities in settings that resemble those of sports enterprises. Studies have examined predictive customer acquisition and retention (Oziri *et al*., 2020) [75], audience segmentation and targeting (Atima *et al*., 2022; Basnet *et al*., 2021) [25, 28], attribution and marketing return on investment (Sanni *et al*., 2020a; Sanni *et al*., 2022a) [87, 90], and the use of business intelligence dashboards in small and medium-sized enterprises (Agwuna *et al*., 2022; Sanni & Atima, 2021b) [9, 86]. Parallel work has examined stage-gate innovation and portfolio growth (Agyei, 2021) [10], integrated product innovation cycles in service industries (Agboada *et al*., 2018b; Oluwo *et al*., 2022) [6, 69], and lean, data-driven process improvement in resource-constrained firms (Ambali *et al*., 2021) [16]. This paper builds on that literature and extends it to the sports sector.

### 1.2. Problem Statement

Practitioner experience in sports management and product marketing suggests a recurring pattern. Marketing teams track impressions, clicks, follower growth and cost per lead, and they become skilled at optimising campaigns. Product and operations teams design membership tiers, training programmes, events and digital features, often based on intuition, competitor imitation or the preferences of senior staff. The two functions meet mainly at launch time, when marketing is asked to promote whatever has been built. The result is a set of predictable failures: campaigns that generate leads for offerings with weak product-market fit; high acquisition costs because conversion problems that are really product problems are treated as advertising problems; innovations that are launched without testing and then quietly withdrawn; and growth that stalls because early-stage customers churn before their lifetime value covers what it cost to acquire them (Oziri *et al*., 2020; Sanni *et al*., 2020a) [75, 87].

The academic literature mirrors this separation. Research on marketing analytics concentrates on measurement, attribution and campaign optimisation (Sanni *et al*., 2022a) [90], while research on sport innovation concentrates on entrepreneurship, technology adoption and new service development (Oteri & Chibwaye, 2022) [72]. Few studies offer an integrated framework that explains how analytical insight should flow into product decisions, how product changes should be evaluated with marketing data, and how the combined system produces customer acquisition and business growth in sports enterprises. This paper responds to that gap.

### 1.3. Aim and Objectives

The aim of this paper is to develop a conceptual model that integrates digital marketing analytics and product innovation to explain and improve customer acquisition and business growth in sports enterprises. The specific objectives are to:

1. review and synthesise the literature on digital marketing analytics, product innovation, customer acquisition and growth as they apply to sports enterprises;
2. identify the theoretical mechanisms through which analytics and innovation capabilities can be integrated;
3. propose a conceptual model and a set of testable propositions describing the relationships among these constructs;
4. translate the model into practical measures, key performance indicators and an implementation roadmap for sports enterprises, with particular reference to small and medium-sized firms in emerging markets; and
5. outline an agenda for future empirical research.

### 1.4. Research Questions

The paper is guided by three questions. First, how do digital marketing analytics capability and product innovation capability jointly influence customer acquisition performance in sports enterprises? Second, through what organisational mechanisms can the two capabilities be integrated so that each strengthens the other? Third, which contextual factors specific to the sports industry shape the strength of these relationships?

### 1.5. Significance and Scope

The paper contributes to sport management and marketing scholarship by connecting two streams that have largely developed in parallel, and by specifying an integrating mechanism that can be measured. For practitioners, it provides a structured way to organise marketing and product teams around shared data and shared growth metrics. The scope is participant-focused and experience-focused sports enterprises (fitness, wellness, academies, events, sports services and sports technology) rather than professional clubs whose revenues are dominated by media rights. Although the model is intended to be general, examples and implementation guidance draw on the context of a Nigerian

sports management firm, reflecting the professional setting in which the paper was developed.

### 1.6. Structure of the Paper

The remainder of the paper is organised as follows. Section 2 describes the research method. Section 3 presents the results and discussion: the literature synthesis, the theoretical foundations, the conceptual model and propositions, a discussion of how the model can be operationalised, its theoretical, managerial and policy implications, and its limitations and directions for future research. Section 4 concludes.

## 2. Research Method

### 2.1. Research Design

This is a conceptual paper. Conceptual papers make their contribution by bridging existing theories, integrating findings across disciplines and proposing new relationships among constructs, rather than by collecting and analysing primary data (MacInnis, 2011; Jaakkola, 2020) [46, 56]. Following Jaakkola's (2020) [46] typology, the paper adopts a model-building design: it identifies constructs, specifies the relationships among them and states those relationships as testable propositions. The criteria proposed by Whetten (1989) [115] for a theoretical contribution guided the work: what factors explain the phenomenon, how they are related, why the relationships hold, and under which conditions. This approach is widely used to develop frameworks in emerging-market management, analytics and operations research (Lawal & Oduleye, 2018a; Lawal & Oduleye, 2019b; Seyi-Lande *et al*., 2022) [51, 52, 93].

### 2.2. Literature Identification and Selection

The paper rests on an integrative literature review, which synthesises representative literature on a topic in an integrated way to generate new frameworks and perspectives (Torraco, 2005; Snyder, 2019) [94, 102]. Integrative reviews suit topics where relevant evidence is spread across disciplines and methods, as is the case here. Sources were identified through searches of academic databases and Google Scholar using combinations of terms related to marketing analytics, digital marketing, product and service innovation, customer acquisition, customer lifetime value, small business growth, sport management and emerging markets. These searches were supplemented by backward citation tracking from key articles and by a curated list of recent scholarship from Nigeria, Ghana and other emerging markets.

Sources were included when they met the criteria summarised in Table 1. The final corpus comprises more than 110 sources, combining foundational international literature with emerging-market scholarship on marketing analytics, product and process innovation, customer lifecycle management, financial and operational analytics, data governance and digital health.

**Table 1:** Criteria for selecting the literature

| Criterion | Included | Excluded |
|---|---|---|
| Time frame | Works published up to and including 2022. | Works published after 2022. |
| Topic | Marketing analytics, digital marketing, innovation, customer acquisition and value, SME growth, sport and wellness services, data governance. | Works with no conceptual link to analytics, innovation, customers or enterprise growth. |
| Source type | Peer-reviewed articles, scholarly books, conceptual frameworks and authoritative regulatory documents. | Opinion pieces and promotional material without scholarly grounding. |
| Context | International studies and studies from Nigeria, Africa and other emerging markets, including adjacent service sectors. | Studies whose findings depend on conditions with no parallel in sports enterprises. |
| Language | English. | Other languages. |

### 2.3. Synthesis and Model Development

The selected literature was analysed thematically in three steps. First, sources were grouped into streams: the sports enterprise context, digital marketing analytics, product innovation, and customer acquisition and growth. Second, findings within and across streams were compared to identify recurring mechanisms, points of agreement and the integration gap discussed in Section 3.1.5. Third, five theoretical lenses (the resource-based view, dynamic capabilities, market orientation, service-dominant logic and lean experimentation) were used to explain why the identified mechanisms should produce the expected outcomes. The constructs, relationships and boundary conditions that emerged were then assembled into the conceptual model in Section 3.3 and stated as eight propositions.

### 2.4. Rigour and Practitioner Grounding

Several steps were taken to strengthen rigour. Each proposition is linked explicitly to at least one theoretical lens and to supporting literature (Table 5). Constructs are defined with observable dimensions (Table 4) and indicative measurement items (Appendix A) so that the model can be tested. The model was also refined through reflection on product marketing practice in a Nigerian sports management firm, which helped ensure that the constructs and implementation guidance are relevant to the problems managers actually face. Because the paper is conceptual, these steps support plausibility and testability rather than empirical confirmation, a limitation addressed in Section 3.6.

**Table 4:** Constructs, definitions and dimensions

| Construct | Definition | Dimensions |
|---|---|---|
| Digital marketing analytics capability (DMAC) | The firm's ability to collect, integrate, analyse and act on digital customer and marketing data. | Data infrastructure; analytics tools and talent; data-driven culture; measurement discipline and attribution. |
| Product innovation capability (PIC) | The firm's ability to develop and launch new or improved sports offerings, services and experiences. | Offering and service design; experience innovation; digital product development; speed of experimentation. |
| Insight-to-Innovation Loop (IIL) | The set of shared data assets, cross-functional routines and iterative experiments through which market insight shapes offerings and offerings are evaluated with market data. | Shared customer data; cross-functional teams and rituals; test-and-learn routines; closed-loop feedback. |
| Customer acquisition performance (CAP) | The effectiveness and efficiency with which the firm attracts and converts new customers. | Reach and qualified leads; funnel conversion rates; customer acquisition cost; channel efficiency. |
| Business growth (BG) | Sustained expansion of revenue, profitability and customer value. | Revenue and margin growth; customer lifetime value; retention and referral; market share. |
| Contextual moderators (CM) | Industry and environmental conditions that strengthen or weaken the model's relationships. | Seasonality and event cycles; consumer digital readiness; firm resource constraints. |

**Table 5:** Summary of propositions

| No. | Proposed relationship | Direction | Main theoretical basis |
|---|---|---|---|
| P1 | DMAC to IIL | Positive | Market orientation; dynamic capabilities |
| P2 | PIC to IIL | Positive | Dynamic capabilities; lean experimentation |
| P3 | DMAC with PIC | Mutually reinforcing | Resource-based view (complementarity) |
| P4 | IIL to CAP | Positive | Customer journey; marketing analytics |
| P5 | IIL to BG | Positive (direct) | Service-dominant logic; customer value |
| P6 | CAP to BG; CAP mediates IIL to BG | Positive; partial mediation | Customer lifetime value |
| P7 | CAP and BG back to DMAC | Positive feedback | Dynamic capabilities (path dependence) |
| P8 | CM moderates IIL to CAP and BG | Contingent | Contingency perspective; sport context |

## 3. Results and Discussion

This section presents the results of the integrative synthesis and discusses their meaning. Section 3.1 reports the synthesis of the four literature streams and the integration gap they reveal. Section 3.2 sets out the theoretical foundations drawn from the synthesis, and Section 3.3 presents the resulting conceptual model and propositions, which are the central result of the paper. Section 3.4 discusses the model and how it can be operationalised, Section 3.5 sets out its implications, and Sections 3.6 and 3.7 address limitations and directions for future research.

### 3.1. Literature Synthesis

This section synthesises four streams of literature that bear on the research questions: the distinctive context of sports enterprises, digital marketing analytics, product innovation, and customer acquisition and growth. It closes by identifying the integration gap that the conceptual model addresses.

#### 3.1.1 The Sports Enterprise and Its Distinctive Marketing Context

Sports enterprises differ from many other businesses in ways that matter for marketing and innovation. Their core offerings are services and experiences that are intangible, perishable and co-produced by the customer: a training session has value only if the member attends and participates, and an empty slot in a class cannot be stored for later sale. Consumer involvement with sport is often high and emotionally charged, which creates strong identification and loyalty but also high expectations (Abutu & Alawode, 2022; Funk, 2017) [4, 39]. Demand is seasonal and event-driven, rising around the new year, before holidays, during major tournaments and around local race calendars. Outcomes are uncertain and partly outside the firm's control, since a customer's results depend on their own effort. Finally, many sports enterprises are small or medium-sized, founder-led and resource-constrained, which limits their capacity to invest in specialised analytics or research and development functions (Anyanwu, 2020; Ratten, 2011) [19, 77].

These features imply that marketing and product cannot be cleanly separated in sport. The experience the customer has during a trial class or a first event is itself the most powerful acquisition tool, and the stories customers share on social media are both marketing content and evidence about product quality. Social media in particular has become a central relationship marketing channel for sport organisations, supporting engagement, community building and two-way dialogue with fans and participants (Abeza *et al*., 2017) [1]. This blurring of boundaries makes an integrated perspective especially relevant.

The sports enterprise also sits where fitness, wellness and health meet. Analytics-based assessment of health needs in underserved communities (Atakpa & Abolaji, 2020) [23] and business intelligence for allocating health and behavioural services (Owoade *et al*., 2022) [73] show how health-related services increasingly depend on data to reach the right users. Research on health communication further shows that entertainment-driven, culturally relevant and omnichannel messaging shapes trust and action (Abutu & Alawode, 2020; Abutu & Alawode, 2021; Abutu & Alawode, 2022) [2, 3, 4], lessons that transfer directly to sports and fitness marketing. Inclusion also matters: work on women's leadership and social impact in African business (Ukadike & Ibeh, 2020) [106] highlights that who designs and leads offerings influences which customers they serve.

#### 3.1.2 Digital Marketing Analytics

Digital marketing analytics refers to the processes, technologies and skills used to measure, manage and analyse marketing performance across digital touchpoints in order to

improve effectiveness and return on investment (Basnet *et al*., 2021; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019) [28, 29]. Wedel and Kannan (2016) [114] describe how data-rich environments have expanded the scope of marketing analytics from aggregate market response modelling to individual-level customer analytics, attribution, personalisation and real-time optimisation. Kannan and Li (2017) [47] frame digital marketing as an adaptive, technology-enabled process through which firms collaborate with customers and partners to create, communicate, deliver and sustain value.

A consistent finding is that analytics creates value only when it is embedded in decision-making. Germann, Lilien and Rangaswamy (2013) [40] show that the deployment of marketing analytics is associated with better firm performance, and that the effect depends on top management support, an analytics culture and appropriate data, information technology and people. Davenport and Harris (2007) [31] similarly argue that firms that compete on analytics treat it as an enterprise-wide capability rather than a technical specialism. Mikalef *et al*. (2019) [62] find that big data analytics capability influences innovation through dynamic capabilities, which suggests a direct conceptual bridge between analytics and product innovation. Research in emerging markets stresses the need to build analytics capacity at both organisational and national levels (Izuchukwu *et al*., 2020; Unamma *et al*., 2021) [45, 109].

For sports enterprises, typical analytics applications include web and app analytics covering traffic sources, funnel drop-off and booking completion (Agwuna *et al*., 2022) [9]; social media analytics covering reach, engagement, sentiment and community growth (Basnet *et al*., 2021) [28]; paid media analytics covering cost per click, cost per lead, cost per acquisition and return on ad spend (Sanni *et al*., 2020a; Sanni *et al*., 2022a) [87, 90]; customer relationship management analytics covering lead scoring, conversion from trial to paid membership and churn prediction (Badmus *et al*., 2019a; Dada *et al*., 2021b; Ukadike, 2022) [26, 30, 105]; and usage analytics drawn from attendance systems, wearables and booking platforms. The last category is particularly valuable because it reveals how customers actually use the product, which is the evidence product teams most need (Unamma *et al*., 2018b) [108].

Beyond descriptive reporting, a growing literature examines predictive analytics. Machine learning models support demand and revenue forecasting (Adesuyi *et al*., 2022; Tonoyan *et al*., 2021a; Unamma *et al*., 2018b) [5, 97, 108], churn prediction and lifecycle value management (Oziri *et al*., 2020) [75], audience segmentation and targeting (Atima *et al*., 2022; Basnet *et al*., 2021) [25, 28], and CRM-based sales forecasting (Dada *et al*., 2021b) [30]. Equally important is the infrastructure that makes analytics usable: data integration pipelines (Badmus *et al*., 2019a) [26], customer data platforms (Ukadike, 2022) [105], and executive and operational dashboards that give managers timely visibility (Agwuna *et al*., 2022; Orise & Niniola, 2022; Sanni & Atima, 2021b) [9, 71, 86]. Studies across sectors show that business intelligence improves resource allocation, cost control and accountability when it is tied to decisions (Izuchukwu *et al*., 2020; Mbonu *et al*., 2021a; Owoade *et al*., 2022) [45, 59, 73], and that the value of analytics depends on governance and control as much as on technical sophistication (Sanni & Atima, 2021a; Sanni *et al*., 2022b) [85, 91].

### 3.1.3 Product Innovation in Sport

Product innovation is the development and introduction of offerings that are new to the firm or the market, including improvements to existing offerings, new service concepts, new delivery models and new experiences. In sport, innovation takes many forms: new training formats and programmes, hybrid physical and digital memberships, community and gamification features, wearable-linked coaching, new event concepts, corporate wellness packages and new pricing and subscription models (Agboada *et al*., 2018b; Oluwo *et al*., 2022; Ratten & Ferreira, 2017; Ratten, 2016; Sanni *et al*., 2020c) [6, 69, 78, 80, 89]. Because the sports product is largely an experience, innovation often concerns the design of the customer journey and the emotional and social value delivered, not only functional features (Funk, 2017; Pine & Gilmore, 1998) [39, 76].

Research on innovation diffusion emphasises that adoption depends on perceived relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability and observability (Agyei *et al*., 2019; Oteri & Chibwaye, 2022; Rogers, 2003) [12, 72, 82]. Each of these attributes can be measured and improved using customer data. Trialability, for example, is central to sports services, where free trial sessions, taster events and introductory offers are standard acquisition tactics. Lean and experimentation-based approaches argue that firms should build minimum viable offerings, test them with real customers, and use validated learning to decide whether to persevere or pivot (Ambali *et al*., 2021; Oyeleye *et al*., 2022; Ries, 2011; Thomke, 2020) [16, 74, 81, 96]. These approaches explicitly depend on measurement, which again points to integration with analytics.

Structured innovation processes offer further guidance. Stage-gate approaches have been linked to organic growth in consumer product portfolios (Agyei, 2021) [10], product management strategies have shaped the rollout of new services in emerging mobile markets (Sanni *et al*., 2020c) [89], and integrated innovation cycles and product design have driven growth in service industries (Agboada *et al*., 2018b; Oluwo *et al*., 2022) [6, 69]. Collaborative relationships with suppliers and partners also foster innovation (Ike *et al*., 2021) [44], and gamification has been shown to influence engagement and attrition (Ukadike, 2019) [104], a finding with clear relevance to fitness programmes. Evidence from the content economy shows how individual creators build operational infrastructure to grow into scalable brands (Anyanwu, 2021) [20]. Lean and Six Sigma methods adapted for small enterprises provide disciplined ways to redesign processes and services with limited resources (Ambali *et al*., 2021; Ashore-Onisemo *et al*., 2021; Okoli *et al*., 2022; Oyeleye *et al*., 2022) [16, 22, 67, 74], and standard operating procedures help sustain improvements once they are found (Agboada *et al*., 2018a; Agboada *et al*., 2019; Eyetsemitan *et al*., 2022) [7, 8, 36].

### 3.1.4 Customer Acquisition and Business Growth

Customer acquisition refers to the activities and outcomes involved in attracting and converting new customers. Its performance is commonly assessed through reach, lead volume and quality, conversion rates at each stage of the funnel, and customer acquisition cost (CAC). Business growth is the expansion of revenue, profit, customer base and market position over time. A central insight of customer-

centric marketing is that acquisition and growth are linked through customer lifetime value (CLV): sustainable growth requires that the value generated by a customer over the relationship exceeds what it cost to acquire and serve them (Gupta, Lehmann & Stuart, 2004; Kumar & Reinartz, 2016; Oziri *et al*., 2020) [41, 49, 75]. The ratio of CLV to CAC, and the time taken to recover acquisition cost, are therefore critical indicators of whether acquisition is creating or destroying value.

Lemon and Verhoef (2016) [55] conceptualise the customer journey as a sequence of pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase stages across many touchpoints, only some of which the firm controls. For sports enterprises, this perspective highlights that acquisition does not end at sign-up. Early experiences, such as onboarding, the first few sessions and the first visible progress, determine whether a newly acquired customer becomes a retained, referring customer or an expensive churner. Hanssens and Pauwels (2016) [42] argue that marketing must demonstrate its value through links to financial outcomes, which in this context means linking acquisition activity not only to sign-ups but to retained revenue (Sanni *et al*., 2020a) [87].

Emerging-market studies reinforce these links. Integrated marketing communications have been associated with subscriber growth (Agyei *et al*., 2018) [11], geomarketing analytics with retail expansion and market penetration (Seyi-Lande *et al*., 2020; Tonoyan *et al*., 2022a) [92, 99], and customer service analytics with revenue growth and competitiveness (Sakyi *et al*., 2022a) [84]. Data-driven brand positioning addresses differentiation challenges (Sanni *et al*., 2020b) [88], and analytics-driven go-to-market frameworks help firms enter new segments (Sanni & Atima, 2021a) [85]. In financial services, CRM-based forecasting, relationship management and product design have been linked to portfolio and revenue growth (Agboada *et al*., 2018b; Dada *et al*., 2021b; Ezeako *et al*., 2019; Uzondu *et al*., 2020) [6, 30, 37, 110]. At enterprise level, financial analytics links operational decisions to value creation, capital allocation and strategy (Lawal & Oduleye, 2018a; Lawal & Oduleye, 2021a; Lawal & Oduleye, 2021b) [51, 53, 54], which provides a basis for connecting marketing and product decisions to business growth.

### 3.1.5 The Integration Gap

Taken together, the literature supports three observations. First, analytics capability improves marketing performance, but its effect on growth depends on whether insight is acted upon across the organisation (Sanni & Atima, 2021b; Seyi-Lande *et al*., 2022) [86, 93]. Second, product innovation is essential for differentiation in experience-based sport markets, but innovation without evidence carries high failure risk (Agyei, 2021; Oluwo *et al*., 2022) [10, 69]. Third, acquisition creates sustainable growth only when the product delivers enough value to retain customers. What is missing is a model that specifies how analytics and innovation interact, the mechanism that integrates them, and how that integration affects both acquisition and growth in the specific context of sports enterprises. Table 2 summarises the main streams and the gap this paper addresses.

**Table 2:** Summary of literature streams and the integration gap

| Stream | Core contribution | Limitation addressed by this paper |
|---|---|---|
| Marketing analytics | Analytics deployment improves marketing decisions and firm performance (Germann *et al*., 2013; Wedel & Kannan, 2016) [40, 114]. | Focus on campaign and channel optimisation; limited attention to how insight shapes offering design. |
| Digital marketing | Digital channels transform how value is communicated and delivered (Kannan & Li, 2017; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019) [29, 47]. | Treats the product as largely given; acquisition success depends on product-market fit. |
| Sport innovation | Innovation and entrepreneurship drive competitiveness in sport (Ratten, 2011, 2016) [77, 78]. | Limited specification of how market data should guide and evaluate innovation. |
| Customer value and journey | Acquisition must be assessed through lifetime value and the full journey (Gupta *et al*., 2004; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016) [41, 55]. | Rarely connected to the joint operation of analytics and innovation capabilities. |
| Analytics and innovation | Analytics capability supports innovation via dynamic capabilities (Mikalef *et al*., 2019) [62]. | Not applied to sports enterprises or to acquisition outcomes; integrating mechanism not specified. |
| Emerging-market analytics and operations | Predictive analytics, BI dashboards and lean methods improve decisions and efficiency in resource-constrained firms (Agwuna *et al*., 2022; Ambali *et al*., 2021) [9, 16]. | Evidence is spread across sectors and has not been applied to sports enterprises. |

## 3.2. Theoretical Foundations

The model draws on five complementary theoretical perspectives. Each explains a different part of why integration matters and how it produces results, as summarised in Table 3.

**Table 3:** How each theoretical lens informs the model

| Theory | Key idea | Role in the conceptual model |
|---|---|---|
| Resource-based view | Advantage comes from valuable, hard-to-imitate resources and capabilities. | Positions the integration loop as a distinctive, inimitable capability. |
| Dynamic capabilities | Firms must sense, seize and transform in changing environments. | Analytics enables sensing; innovation enables seizing; integration links them. |
| Market orientation | Generate, disseminate and respond to market intelligence. | Explains why shared data and cross-functional routines matter. |
| Service-dominant logic | Value is co-created through customer participation. | Justifies usage and engagement data as evidence of value; links satisfaction to advocacy. |
| Lean experimentation | Build, measure, learn through validated experiments. | Supplies the operating routine of the insight-to-innovation loop. |

### 3.2.1 Resource-Based View

The resource-based view holds that sustained competitive advantage arises from resources and capabilities that are valuable, rare, difficult to imitate and well organised (Barney, 1991) [27]. Advertising tools, analytics software and even product ideas are easily copied. What is hard to imitate is the way a firm combines its proprietary customer data, its people and its routines to keep producing offerings that customers prefer. From this perspective, the integration of analytics and innovation is itself a higher-order capability that can be a source of advantage, precisely because it is embedded in organisational processes and accumulated knowledge (Lawal & Oduleye, 2021b) [54].

### 3.2.2 Dynamic Capabilities

Dynamic capabilities are the firm's ability to integrate, build and reconfigure internal and external competences to address rapidly changing environments (Teece, Pisano & Shuen, 1997) [95]. Later work describes them as capacities for sensing opportunities, seizing them and transforming the organisation accordingly. Digital marketing analytics maps naturally onto sensing, since it reveals shifts in customer demand, channel behaviour and competitive activity. Product innovation maps onto seizing, since it converts sensed opportunities into offerings. Integration, as conceptualised here, is the mechanism that keeps sensing and seizing connected in a continuous cycle, which is particularly important in sport markets that change with seasons, events, technology and health trends (Oteri & Chibwaye, 2022; Unamma *et al*., 2021) [72, 109].

### 3.2.3 Market Orientation

Market orientation is the organisation-wide generation of market intelligence, its dissemination across departments and organisation-wide responsiveness to it (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990; Seyi-Lande *et al*., 2022) [48, 93]. Day (1994) [32] emphasises market sensing and customer linking as distinctive capabilities of market-driven organisations. The three components of market orientation correspond closely to the integrated model: analytics generates intelligence, cross-functional routines disseminate it, and product innovation is a central form of responsiveness. The theory also predicts that weak dissemination, such as data kept within the marketing department, limits performance even when intelligence generation is strong (Uzondu *et al*., 2021) [111].

### 3.2.4 Service-Dominant Logic

Service-dominant logic argues that value is co-created by firms and customers through the application of knowledge and skills, and that goods are merely distribution mechanisms for service (Vargo & Lusch, 2004) [112]. This lens fits sport, where value emerges only when the customer participates. It implies that customer data, especially usage and engagement data, are direct evidence of value co-creation, and that innovation should be directed at improving the conditions under which customers create value for themselves. It also explains why satisfied customers become credible marketing channels through referrals and social sharing (Abutu & Alawode, 2022; Anyanwu, 2021) [4, 20].

### 3.2.5 Experimentation and Lean Innovation

Lean and experimentation-based perspectives contribute the operating logic of the model. Ries (2011) [81] proposes a build-measure-learn loop in which offerings are developed as testable hypotheses, measured with actionable metrics and refined through validated learning. Thomke (2020) [96] shows how organisations that institutionalise controlled experiments make better decisions and innovate faster. These ideas provide the practical mechanism through which analytics and innovation are joined: every product change is treated as an experiment, and every experiment is evaluated with marketing and customer data (Ambali *et al*., 2021; Sanni *et al*., 2022b) [16, 91].

## 3.3. The Conceptual Model

### 3.3.1 Overview

Figure 1 presents the proposed Integrated Analytics and Innovation Growth Model for sports enterprises. Two antecedent capabilities, digital marketing analytics capability and product innovation capability, feed a central integrating mechanism labelled the Insight-to-Innovation Loop. The loop drives two outcome constructs, customer acquisition performance and business growth. A feedback path returns performance data to the analytics capability, creating a self-reinforcing cycle. Contextual moderators specific to sport shape the strength of the relationships.

### 3.3.2 Construct Definitions

Table 4 defines each construct and lists the dimensions through which it can be observed.

### 3.3.3 The Insight-to-Innovation Loop

The integrating mechanism is the central theoretical contribution of the model, so it merits a fuller description. The loop is not a single process but a combination of four elements that must operate together.

- **Shared customer data:** Marketing, product, sales and operations draw on a common view of the customer, combining acquisition data (source, campaign, cost), behavioural data (bookings, attendance, app usage, content consumption) and outcome data (renewals, upgrades, cancellations, referrals). A shared view prevents each function from optimising its own metric in isolation (Ukadike, 2022) [105].
- **Cross-functional teams and rituals:** Product marketers, analysts, coaches or programme designers and customer-facing staff work as a single growth team with joint objectives. Regular rituals, such as weekly growth reviews and monthly offering reviews, ensure that insight is discussed by the people able to act on it (Seyi-Lande *et al*., 2022) [93].
- **Test-and-learn routines:** Offering changes, pricing, onboarding flows, class formats and messages are framed as hypotheses and tested through A/B tests, pilots in selected locations, limited-time offers or beta cohorts before full rollout (Sanni *et al*., 2022b) [91].
- **Closed-loop feedback:** Results of every test are recorded, shared and used to update both marketing targeting and product roadmaps. Over time this creates an organisational memory of what works for which segments (Agboada *et al*., 2019; Eyetsemitan *et al*., 2022) [8, 36].

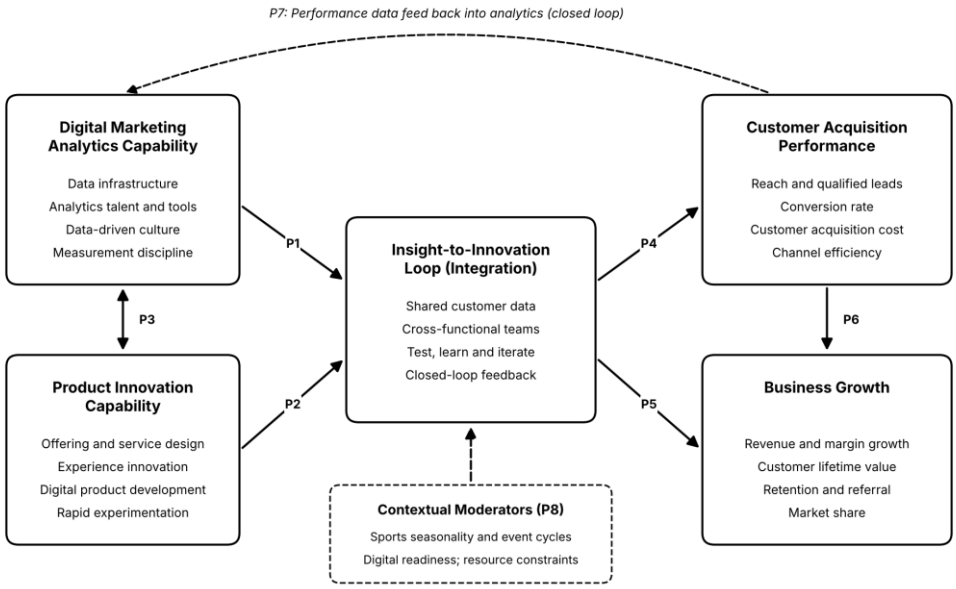


**Fig 1:** Integrated Analytics and Innovation Growth Model for sports enterprises (P1 to P8 denote propositions)

Conceptually, the loop can be described as a cycle of five stages: Sense (detect patterns and opportunities in data), Hypothesise (frame a product or experience change and its expected effect), Build (create a minimum viable version), Test (expose it to a controlled segment and measure acquisition and engagement outcomes) and Scale or Learn (roll out what works, record and discard what does not). The loop operates continuously and at several speeds, from rapid weekly tests of messages and landing pages to quarterly cycles for new programmes or membership models.

### 3.3.4 Propositions

#### Antecedents of Integration

Analytics capability supplies the evidence that integration depends on. Firms with stronger data infrastructure, skills and measurement discipline are better able to identify which segments respond to which offers, where customers drop out of the funnel, and which product features predict retention. This evidence gives product discussions a factual basis and makes test-and-learn routines feasible (Atima *et al*., 2022; Germann *et al*., 2013; Mikalef *et al*., 2019; Sanni & Atima, 2021b; Unamma *et al*., 2021) [25, 40, 62, 86, 109].

***P1:*** *Digital marketing analytics capability is positively associated with the strength of the Insight-to-Innovation Loop in sports enterprises.*

Product innovation capability supplies the means of responding. A firm that can rapidly design and launch new programmes, packages and experiences gives analytical insight somewhere to go. Without such capacity, insight accumulates in reports but does not change what customers are offered (Agyei, 2021; Kohli & Jaworski, 1990; Oluwo *et al*., 2022; Ries, 2011) [10, 48, 69, 81].

***P2:*** *Product innovation capability is positively associated with the strength of the Insight-to-Innovation Loop in sports enterprises.*

The two capabilities are also likely to develop together. Innovation creates new data streams, such as app usage or wearable data, that expand analytics capability; analytics reveals unmet needs that direct innovation effort. Over time each capability raises the return on investment in the other (Unamma *et al*., 2021) [109].

***P3:*** *Digital marketing analytics capability and product innovation capability are mutually reinforcing, such that investment in one increases the marginal value of the other.*

#### Effects on Acquisition and Growth

A strong loop improves acquisition in several ways. Offerings designed with evidence about customer needs have better product-market fit, which raises conversion rates. Tested onboarding and trial experiences reduce funnel leakage. Marketing messages grounded in real usage and outcome data are more credible. And because the firm learns which segments value which offers, targeting becomes more precise and CAC falls (Basnet *et al*., 2021; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Wedel & Kannan, 2016) [28, 55, 114].

**P4:** The strength of the Insight-to-Innovation Loop is positively associated with customer acquisition performance, reflected in higher conversion rates, more qualified leads and lower customer acquisition cost.

The loop also drives growth beyond acquisition. Innovations informed by usage data improve retention and engagement, which raises customer lifetime value; new offerings create upsell and cross-sell opportunities; and satisfied customers become referral sources. These effects operate partly independently of acquisition (Oziri *et al*., 2020; Sakyi *et al*., 2022a) [75, 84].

**P5:** The strength of the Insight-to-Innovation Loop is positively and directly associated with business growth, reflected in higher revenue, retention and customer lifetime value.

At the same time, better acquisition contributes to growth by expanding the customer base efficiently and improving the CLV to CAC ratio, which frees resources for further investment (Gupta *et al*., 2004; Kumar & Reinartz, 2016; Lawal & Oduleye, 2021a) [41, 49, 53].

**P6:** Customer acquisition performance is positively associated with business growth and partially mediates the relationship between the Insight-to-Innovation Loop and business growth.

#### Feedback and Context

Every campaign, trial and new customer generates data. When these outcomes are captured systematically, they

enlarge and enrich the firm's data assets, sharpen its models and improve its future decisions. The model therefore contains a positive feedback loop, consistent with the idea that dynamic capabilities are path-dependent and cumulative (Teece *et al*., 1997; Unamma *et al*., 2018b; Unamma, 2022) [95, 107, 108].

**P7:** Customer acquisition and growth outcomes, when systematically captured, feed back into and strengthen digital marketing analytics capability, producing a self-reinforcing growth cycle.

Finally, several features of the sports context condition these relationships. Strong seasonality and event cycles create short windows in which rapid testing and response are especially valuable, which is likely to strengthen the effect of the loop (Tonoyan *et al*., 2021a) [97]. Consumer digital readiness, including smartphone access, data costs, comfort with online payments and trust in digital platforms, determines how much of the customer journey can be observed and influenced digitally (Agyei *et al*., 2019; Alaka *et al*., 2022; Oteri & Chibwaye, 2022) [12, 14, 72]. Resource constraints, typical of small and medium-sized sports enterprises, may weaken the loop's effects if firms cannot fund tools or staff, although lean methods can partially offset this (Ambali *et al*., 2021; Anyanwu, 2020) [16, 19].

**P8:** The relationships between the Insight-to-Innovation Loop and its outcomes are moderated by sports-specific contingencies: they are stronger under pronounced seasonality and event-driven demand and higher consumer digital readiness, and weaker under severe resource constraints.

### 3.4. Discussion

#### 3.4.1 How the Model Answers the Research Questions

The model responds directly to the three research questions. On the first question, it proposes that analytics capability and product innovation capability influence customer acquisition mainly through their joint operation in the Insight-to-Innovation Loop, rather than separately (P1, P2 and P4). On the second, it identifies the organisational mechanisms of integration as shared customer data, cross-functional teams and rituals, test-and-learn routines and closed-loop feedback, and argues that the two capabilities reinforce each other over time (P3 and P7). On the third, it highlights seasonality and event cycles, consumer digital readiness and resource constraints as sports-specific contingencies (P8). Taken together, these arguments suggest that the common separation of marketing and product work in sports enterprises is not merely an organisational inconvenience but a direct constraint on efficient acquisition and sustainable growth (Oziri *et al*., 2020; Sanni *et al*., 2020a; Seyi-Lande *et al*., 2022) [75, 87, 93].

The model also qualifies some common assumptions. It implies that higher marketing spending will not by itself fix weak conversion when the underlying offering is poorly matched to customer needs, and that innovation will fail to scale if its results are not measured. It further suggests that the benefits of integration accumulate: firms that start early build richer data and stronger routines, which makes their advantage harder to imitate (Lawal & Oduleye, 2021b; Unamma *et al*., 2021) [54, 109].

#### 3.4.2 Operationalising the Model

A conceptual model is useful to managers only if it can be translated into decisions, structures and metrics. The following subsections set out how a sports enterprise, such as a sports management and fitness services firm operating in Lagos, could apply the model. The guidance is illustrative and intended to be adapted to the size and maturity of each organisation.

#### 3.4.3 A Unified Growth Metrics Architecture

Integration begins with agreeing on a single set of metrics that both marketing and product teams own. Table 6 proposes a layered architecture that moves from campaign activity to financial outcomes, so that every team can see how its work contributes to growth (Sakyi *et al*., 2022b; Seyi-Lande *et al*., 2022) [83, 93].

**Table 6:** Proposed KPI architecture for an integrated sports enterprise

| Layer | Example indicators | Primary decisions informed |
|---|---|---|
| Reach and engagement | Impressions; social engagement rate; website and app sessions; content views; community growth. | Channel mix; content strategy; audience targeting. |
| Acquisition funnel | Leads by source; cost per lead; trial bookings; trial attendance rate; trial to paid conversion; CAC by channel and segment. | Budget allocation; offer design; onboarding improvements. |
| Product engagement | Sessions per member per week; programme completion; feature adoption; event participation; Net Promoter Score. | Programme design; scheduling; feature roadmap. |
| Retention and value | Month-1 and month-3 retention; churn rate; average revenue per member; upgrade rate; referral rate; CLV. | Pricing and tiering; loyalty and community initiatives. |
| Growth and efficiency | Revenue growth; gross margin; CLV to CAC ratio; CAC payback period; share of revenue from new offerings. | Investment priorities; innovation portfolio; scaling decisions. |

Two indicators deserve emphasis. The CLV to CAC ratio reveals whether acquisition is creating value: a ratio comfortably above one, commonly targeted at three or more in subscription businesses, indicates that customers are worth more than they cost to acquire. The share of revenue from offerings launched in the last twelve months indicates whether innovation is translating into commercial results. Placing both on the same dashboard makes the joint contribution of marketing and product visible (Ebisi *et al*., 2022) [33].

#### 3.4.4 Implementation Roadmap

Few sports enterprises can build a mature integrated capability at once. Table 7 proposes a phased roadmap that allows firms to start with modest resources and build capability progressively (Ambali *et al*., 2021; Oyeleye *et al*., 2022) [16, 74].

**Table 7:** Phased implementation roadmap

| Phase | Indicative timing | Key actions | Milestone |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Foundation | Months 0 to 3 | Define unified KPIs; install consistent tracking (website, social, ads, booking); centralise customer records in a CRM; tag every lead by source and campaign. | Single dashboard tracking the funnel from lead to paid member. |
| 2. Insight | Months 3 to 6 | Segment customers by goal, behaviour and value; map the customer journey; analyse drop-off and churn drivers; gather structured feedback. | Documented segments and top five growth opportunities. |
| 3. Integration | Months 6 to 9 | Form a cross-functional growth team; run weekly growth reviews; establish an experiment backlog and a simple test template. | At least two experiments completed per month with recorded learning. |
| 4. Innovation | Months 9 to 15 | Develop and pilot new offerings informed by insight (for example hybrid memberships, corporate packages, community challenges); test pricing and onboarding. | New offerings validated through pilots before full launch. |
| 5. Scale and optimise | Month 15 onward | Scale proven offerings; automate reporting; introduce predictive models for churn and lead scoring; refine attribution. | Improving CLV to CAC ratio and rising share of revenue from new offerings. |

Each phase depends on organisational as well as technical change. Research on standardising change management (Uzondu *et al*., 2021) [111], on standardised reporting workflows (Alieme *et al*., 2022) [15] and on cloud migration (Ladapo *et al*., 2022) [50] offers practical guidance. People matter as much as tools: competency-based onboarding (Ukadike, 2018) [103], strategic recruitment and employee integration (Akhigbe *et al*., 2020) [13], staff engagement (Wikiri *et al*., 2022) [116] and the skills that link IT operations with digital entrepreneurship (Anyanwu, 2022) [21] all influence how quickly a sports enterprise can build its integrated capability.

### 3.4.5 Illustrative Application

Consider how the loop might operate in a Lagos-based sports management firm offering personal training, group fitness, corporate wellness programmes and community events. Suppose analytics shows that paid social campaigns generate many leads among young professionals but that a large share of trial participants never attend a second session, and that those who do return tend to have booked group classes in the early morning or evening around office hours. Treated as a pure marketing problem, the response would be to change the audience or the creative. Treated through the integrated model, the team frames a product hypothesis: a structured four-week starter programme timed around commuting hours, with a peer group, a progress check-in and a WhatsApp community, will increase trial-to-paid conversion (Oyeleye *et al*., 2022) [74].

The team pilots the programme with one cohort, measures second-session attendance, conversion and early retention against a comparison group, and gathers qualitative feedback. If the pilot outperforms, the offering is scaled and campaign messaging is rebuilt around it, using real participant stories as social proof. If it does not, the learning is recorded and a revised hypothesis is tested. Corporate wellness data could be used in the same way: analytics on employee participation by department and time of day might lead to new lunchtime or virtual formats, which are then evaluated with uptake and renewal data from client organisations. In each case, insight shapes the product, the product shapes the marketing, and results flow back into the data (Abutu & Alawode, 2021) [3].

### 3.4.6 Enablers and Common Barriers

Several enablers support successful implementation: visible leadership sponsorship of data-driven decision-making; a product marketing role that bridges marketing, product and operations; affordable tools, such as web analytics, social media insights, CRM and booking platforms with export functions; and a culture that treats failed experiments as learning rather than as mistakes. Common barriers include fragmented data held in spreadsheets and personal phones, unclear ownership of metrics, short-term pressure to maximise lead volume, limited analytical skills, and concerns about data privacy. In Nigeria, firms must also comply with data protection requirements, including the Nigeria Data Protection Regulation of 2019, which makes consent management and transparent data practices part of a sound analytics capability rather than an afterthought (Annan, 2022; Atakpa & Abolaji, 2022; Fadero *et al*., 2021; Mbonu *et al*., 2018; Mbonu *et al*., 2019; Mbonu *et al*., 2022a; Okoruwa *et al*., 2020; Ominyi & Anichukwueze, 2022a) [18, 24, 38, 58, 60, 61, 68, 70].

Privacy and ethics deserve particular attention as analytics becomes more sophisticated. Privacy-preserving data architectures (Atakpa & Abolaji, 2022) [24], privacy-centric security engineering (Okoruwa *et al*., 2020) [68] and data protection impact assessment (Mbonu *et al*., 2022a) [61] help firms use customer data responsibly, and cyber risk maturity assessments against Nigerian regulation show where many firms still fall short (Fadero *et al*., 2021) [38]. Marketing communications must also respect consumer protection standards (Anichukwueze *et al*., 2019) [17]. For smaller sports enterprises, cost-conscious approaches to IT support and digital operations (Anyanwu, 2020) [19] and predictive budgeting (Adesuyi *et al*., 2022) [5] can help fund analytics capability without overstretching limited resources.

## 3.5. Implications

### 3.5.1 Theoretical Implications

The paper makes four theoretical contributions. First, it brings together marketing analytics and sport innovation literatures that have developed largely in parallel, and positions their integration as a distinct higher-order capability rather than as two separate investments. Second, it specifies the integrating mechanism, the Insight-to-Innovation Loop, in terms of observable elements (shared data, cross-functional routines, test-and-learn practices and closed-loop feedback), which makes the concept measurable. Third, it links capability to outcomes through both acquisition and growth paths, and introduces a feedback relationship that explains how early advantages can compound over time. Fourth, it identifies boundary conditions that are specific to

sport, adding contextual depth to general theories of analytics and dynamic capabilities (Seyi-Lande *et al*., 2022) [93].

### 3.5.2 Managerial Implications

For managers of sports enterprises, the model suggests several practical priorities.

- **Measure acquisition by value, not volume.** Leads and followers are useful signals but should be judged against conversion, retention and CLV. A cheaper lead that never returns is more expensive than it looks (Oziri *et al*., 2020) [75].
- **Treat conversion problems as possible product problems.** When trial participants do not convert, the cause may lie in scheduling, onboarding, pricing or programme design rather than in the advertising (Oyeleye *et al*., 2022) [74].
- **Give product marketing a bridging role.** A product marketing function that owns positioning, customer insight and launch performance is well placed to run the integration loop (Sanni *et al*., 2020c; Seyi-Lande *et al*., 2022) [89, 93].
- **Institutionalise experimentation.** Small, frequent, well-documented tests reduce the risk of innovation and build organisational learning, even with limited budgets (Ambali *et al*., 2021; Oyeleye *et al*., 2022) [16, 74].
- **Plan around the sports calendar.** Seasonal peaks and major events are the best moments to launch tested offerings, while quieter periods are suited to experimentation and analysis (Tonoyan *et al*., 2021a) [97].
- **Build trust through responsible data use.** Transparent consent, secure storage and clear value exchange protect customers and strengthen the brand (Ominyi & Anichukwueze, 2022a) [70].
- **Link marketing and product metrics to financial outcomes.** Executive decision systems and cost management models should show how acquisition and innovation decisions affect cash flow, profitability and enterprise value (Lawal & Oduleye, 2019b; Oduleye & Medon, 2021) [52, 65].

### 3.5.3 Implications for Emerging Markets and Policy

The model is particularly relevant for sports enterprises in emerging markets. In Nigeria, growing urban health awareness, a young population and high social media usage create strong demand potential, while infrastructure and cost constraints limit how much firms can spend on acquisition. In such conditions, the ability to learn quickly and allocate scarce resources to offerings and channels that demonstrably work is a significant advantage. Messaging platforms, mobile payments and community-based marketing are often more important than in mature markets, and the model accommodates these by treating them as data sources and innovation spaces within the loop (Agyei *et al*., 2019; Okafor *et al*., 2021) [12, 66].

Lessons can also be drawn from adjacent sectors in emerging markets. Digital transformation in operations, pharmaceutical manufacturing and education (Agboada *et al*., 2018a; Efobi *et al*., 2021; Obukadata *et al*., 2021a) [7, 34, 64], fintech-enabled growth among small businesses (Okafor *et al*., 2021) [66], and data-driven operations in logistics and retail (Efobi *et al*., 2022b; Ijagbemi *et al*., 2019) [35, 43] all point to the same conclusion: firms that combine data, process discipline and customer-centred innovation grow faster than those that rely on any one of these alone.

The model also has implications for policymakers and industry bodies. Government agencies, sports federations and enterprise support programmes could accelerate adoption by funding shared analytics tools and training for small sports businesses, promoting clear and practical guidance on data protection compliance (Anichukwueze *et al*., 2019; Ominyi & Anichukwueze, 2022a) [17, 70], and supporting digital payment and connectivity infrastructure that widens access to digitally delivered sports services (Agyei *et al*., 2019; Alaka *et al*., 2022; Okafor *et al*., 2021) [12, 14, 66]. Building national analytics capacity more broadly would increase the pool of skilled staff that sports enterprises can draw on (Unamma *et al*., 2021) [109].

## 3.6. Limitations

As a conceptual contribution, the paper has several limitations. The propositions have not yet been tested empirically, and the strength and direction of the relationships may vary across sub-sectors, firm sizes and countries. The model emphasises organisational capabilities and may underplay external factors such as competitive intensity, regulation and macroeconomic conditions, including inflation and exchange rate volatility that affect consumer spending. The measurement of the Insight-to-Innovation Loop also requires validation.

The literature base also has limits. The review was integrative rather than systematic, so the selection of sources involved judgement and may not capture every relevant study. Restricting the corpus to works published up to 2022 and written in English may have excluded relevant evidence. Much of the emerging-market literature drawn on comes from adjacent service sectors such as banking, telecommunications and professional services rather than from sport itself, so its transfer to sports enterprises is an assumption that requires testing. Finally, the practitioner grounding draws on experience in a single Nigerian firm, which may limit how far the guidance applies to other contexts.

## 3.7. Future Research

Future research could pursue several directions. Survey-based studies of sports enterprises could develop and validate scales for each construct and test the propositions using structural equation modelling, including the mediating role of acquisition performance and the moderating role of contextual factors. Longitudinal designs could examine the feedback relationship proposed in P7. Case studies of sports enterprises in Nigeria and other African markets could explore how the loop operates in practice and how resource constraints are overcome. Field experiments could estimate the causal effect of integrated test-and-learn routines on conversion and retention. Further work could also examine the role of emerging technologies, such as wearables, machine learning and automated personalisation, in strengthening the loop (Tonoyan *et al*., 2021b; Tonoyan *et al*., 2022b; Tonoyan *et al*., 2022c; Unamma, 2022) [98, 100, 101, 107]. Cross-sector work on predictive maintenance for e-commerce systems (Mayo *et al*., 2021) [57] also offers methods that could be adapted to sports enterprises. Appendix A provides indicative measurement items to support such work.

Table 8 summarises a research agenda that links the main open questions to suitable methods.

**Table 8:** Agenda for future research

| Research question | Related propositions | Suggested method |
|---|---|---|
| Can the constructs be measured reliably in sports enterprises? | All constructs | Scale development and validation using surveys of managers (see Appendix A). |
| Does the Insight-to-Innovation Loop mediate the effect of capabilities on acquisition and growth? | P1, P2, P4, P5, P6 | Cross-sectional surveys analysed with structural equation modelling. |
| Do analytics and innovation capabilities reinforce each other over time? | P3, P7 | Longitudinal panel studies of the same firms. |
| How does the loop operate in practice under resource constraints? | P8 | Multiple case studies of Nigerian and other African sports enterprises. |
| What is the causal effect of test-and-learn routines on conversion and retention? | P4, P5 | Field experiments and A/B tests in partner firms. |
| Do the relationships differ across sub-sectors and countries? | P8 | Comparative multi-country and multi-segment studies. |

## 4. Conclusion

Sports enterprises compete in markets where customers are increasingly digital, choices are plentiful and acquisition is costly. Investing in digital marketing analytics or in product innovation alone is not enough. Analytics without innovation optimises the promotion of offerings that may not deserve to win, and innovation without analytics guesses at what customers want. This paper has argued that sustainable customer acquisition and business growth come from integrating the two capabilities through an Insight-to-Innovation Loop in which market evidence continuously shapes offerings and offerings are continuously evaluated with market evidence.

The proposed model, grounded in the resource-based view, dynamic capabilities, market orientation, service-dominant logic and lean experimentation, specifies eight propositions, a measurement framework, a KPI architecture and an implementation roadmap. For sports enterprises in Nigeria and comparable markets, the model offers a practical route to doing more with limited resources: learning faster than competitors, building offerings that customers value and choose to share, and turning every campaign and every new customer into knowledge that fuels the next cycle of growth.

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**Appendix a: Indicative Measurement Items**

The following items are proposed for future survey research, to be rated by managers on a seven-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). They are indicative and require adaptation, pre-testing and validation.

**Table 9**

| Construct | Indicative items |
|---|---|
| Digital marketing analytics capability | We track the source of every new lead and customer.<br>We can measure conversion at each stage of our customer journey.<br>We have staff with the skills to analyse our marketing data.<br>Marketing decisions in our firm are based mainly on data rather than intuition. |
| Product innovation capability | We regularly introduce new programmes, services or experiences.<br>We can develop and launch a new offering quickly.<br>Our offerings are differentiated from those of competitors.<br>We use digital technology to enhance our customer experience. |
| Insight-to-Innovation Loop | Marketing and product or operations staff share the same customer data.<br>We hold regular meetings where customer data inform product decisions.<br>We test new offerings with a small group of customers before full launch.<br>Results of our tests are recorded and used in future decisions. |
| Customer acquisition performance | Our trial-to-paid conversion rate has improved over the last year.<br>Our cost of acquiring a new customer has fallen over the last year.<br>The quality of leads we generate has improved.<br>We acquire more customers than our main competitors. |
| Business growth | Our revenue has grown faster than the industry average.<br>Our customer retention rate has improved.<br>The average lifetime value of our customers has increased.<br>A growing share of our revenue comes from recently launched offerings. |
| Contextual moderators | Demand for our services varies strongly with seasons and events.<br>Most of our target customers are comfortable buying and booking online.<br>Limited funds or staff restrict our investment in data and innovation. |

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