A Conceptual Framework for Integrating E-Commerce Analytics and Consumer Insights into Sports Product Development and Marketing Strategies

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Abstract

The rapid growth of online retail, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has given sports brands access to unprecedented volumes of behavioral, transactional and attitudinal data. Yet many firms in the sports goods sector continue to treat e-commerce analytics as a sales reporting function, separate from the product development and marketing processes it could inform. This conceptual paper addresses that gap by proposing the Integrated E-Commerce Analytics and Consumer Insight (IECACI) framework. Drawing on the resource-based view, dynamic capabilities theory, market orientation and service-dominant logic, the framework explains how data foundations, analytics capability and consumer insight generation combine to shape both product development and marketing strategy, and how outcomes feed a continuous learning loop. The framework recognizes features that distinguish sports markets, including fan identification, the blend of performance and lifestyle motives, pronounced seasonality and event-driven demand. The paper follows an integrative conceptual review design, synthesizing literature published up to 2021. Eight research propositions are developed, together with an illustrative application to a running footwear line, a discussion of how the framework advances existing knowledge, and a phased implementation roadmap. The paper contributes a unifying structure for scholars studying data-driven innovation in sport business and offers managers a practical guide to converting digital customer data into products and campaigns that consumers value.

Keywords: e-commerce analytics; consumer insight; sports marketing; new product development; big data; customer analytics; sports products; dynamic capabilities

DOI: 10.21590/ijtmh.07.04.11

1. INTRODUCTION

The global sporting goods industry, encompassing footwear, apparel, equipment and licensed merchandise, has undergone a structural shift toward digital channels over the past decade. Leading brands have reorganized around direct-to-consumer strategies, invested in proprietary apps and online stores, and acquired digital fitness platforms. Under Armour's purchases of MapMyFitness and MyFitnessPal and adidas's acquisition of Runtastic illustrate how sports companies have sought direct access to consumer behavior data. The COVID-19 pandemic intensified this shift in 2020 and 2021, as store closures pushed consumers online and home fitness demand surged (Ratten, 2020; Verhoef et al., 2021).

These developments mean that sports brands now hold rich streams of data describing what consumers search for, what they browse and abandon, what they buy together, what they return and why, and how they talk about products in reviews and on social media. Research in marketing and information systems shows that such data, when converted into insight, can improve forecasting, personalization, pricing and innovation (Erevelles et al., 2016; Wedel & Kannan, 2016; Wu et al., 2020). However, the value of data is not automatic. Many organizations accumulate data faster than they can interpret it, and insights generated in e-commerce teams frequently fail to reach designers, product managers and brand strategists (Davenport & Harris, 2007; Mikalef et al., 2018).

Sports products present a distinctive context for this problem. Purchases are shaped not only by functional performance, such as cushioning, durability or breathability, but also by identification with teams and athletes, by social and lifestyle signaling, and by the emotional intensity of sport fandom (Funk & James, 2001; Wann & Branscombe, 1993). Demand is strongly seasonal and is punctuated by events such as tournaments, transfers and record-breaking performances. Product communities of athletes and enthusiasts are also a recognized source of innovation (Füller et al., 2007; von Hippel, 1986). These features create both opportunities and complications for data-driven decision making.

Despite growing interest, the literature remains fragmented. Studies of big data analytics tend to be industry-agnostic, sport management research has focused more on fan behavior and sponsorship than on product innovation, and work on data-driven new product development rarely addresses marketing integration. There is no integrative framework that explains how e-commerce

analytics and consumer insight can jointly inform both product development and marketing strategy in sports markets. This paper seeks to fill that gap by addressing three questions:

- **RQ1.** What data sources and analytics capabilities are required to generate actionable consumer insight from sports e-commerce environments?
- **RQ2.** Through what mechanisms does consumer insight influence sports product development and marketing strategy?
- **RQ3.** What organizational, environmental and sport-specific conditions moderate the value created by this integration?

Evidence from emerging markets reinforces this picture. Reviews of digital transformation in operations management describe a broad move toward automation, analytics and process redesign (Agboada, Ezeako, Okoli, & Uzondu, 2018), while studies of payment portal adoption and fintech-enabled transaction banking show how digital infrastructure has lowered the barriers to online purchasing for consumers and small firms alike (Agyei et al., 2019; Okafor et al., 2021; Osuji et al., 2021). The pandemic exposed the fragility of physical channels and accelerated these shifts, as shown by work on business continuity in financial services, essential travel under movement restrictions and procurement resilience during disruption (Ajayi et al., 2020; Babayemi et al., 2020; Fadero et al., 2020). Research on digital inclusion further suggests that the pace at which consumers move online depends on infrastructure and skills, which matters for sports brands operating across diverse markets (Unamma et al., 2018a).

At the same time, the strategic value of analytics has been argued across sectors. Studies of data-driven executive decision systems, financial analytics for enterprise value creation, and the alignment of planning analytics with corporate strategy all point to analytics as a source of competitive advantage when it is connected to decisions (Lawal & Oduleye, 2018a; Lawal & Oduleye, 2019b; Lawal & Oduleye, 2021b). Work on building national analytics capacity makes the same point at the level of institutions (Unamma, Okwesa, et al., 2021). A recurring caution in this literature is that insight frequently stalls at functional boundaries, which is why multi-stakeholder governance alignment and shared responsibility models have been proposed to coordinate decisions across units and partners (Eyetsemitan et al., 2020; Ominyi et al., 2021).

The paper makes three contributions. First, it synthesizes literatures on e-commerce analytics, consumer insight, data-driven innovation and sports consumer behavior into a single conceptual

model. Second, it specifies testable propositions that can guide empirical research. Third, it translates the framework into a practical roadmap for managers. The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 describes the research method. Section 3 presents the results and discussion, comprising the literature synthesis, the conceptual model, research propositions, an illustrative application, a discussion of the findings, implications, limitations and future research. Section 4 concludes.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a conceptual research design. Following MacInnis (2011), conceptual contributions can take the form of envisioning, explicating, relating or debating. The present paper is primarily a *relating* contribution, as it connects previously separate bodies of knowledge into an integrated model. Following Jaakkola's (2020) typology of conceptual articles, it uses a *model* approach: it identifies constructs, specifies the relationships among them and develops propositions for future testing.

The review followed an integrative approach, which is suited to emerging topics that span several disciplines and where the aim is to generate new frameworks rather than to aggregate effect sizes. Literature was identified through searches of major academic databases and through citation tracking, using combinations of terms such as e-commerce analytics, big data analytics capability, customer analytics, consumer insight, data-driven new product development, marketing analytics, omnichannel, sport consumer behavior and fan identification. Because the problem also involves fulfillment, data governance and organizational capability, the search was extended to adjacent work on supply chain analytics, procurement, data protection, process improvement and talent development.

Sources were included if they (a) were published up to and including 2021, (b) addressed analytics, digital commerce, consumer insight, innovation, marketing, supply chain or organizational capability in a way that could inform the research questions, and (c) offered conceptual, review or empirical contributions that could be related to the sports goods context. Sources focused solely on unrelated technical domains were excluded. The final synthesis draws on 156 sources published between 1986 and 2021, combining foundational work in marketing, strategy and sport management with recent studies from emerging-market contexts.

The framework was developed in three steps. First, the review of literature on e-commerce analytics, big data capability, data-driven NPD, marketing analytics and sport consumer behavior was conducted using major databases, focusing on peer-reviewed work published up to 2021. Second, recurring constructs and relationships were extracted and grouped thematically. Third, these constructs were integrated through the theoretical lenses described in Section 3.1.5, producing the framework, propositions and an illustrative application. As with all conceptual work, the framework is intended to be evaluated through subsequent empirical research.

To strengthen rigor, the constructs and relationships were checked against the research questions and against established theory, and the resulting model was tested for internal consistency through an illustrative application. The output of the study is therefore a conceptual model with explicit propositions, which is the appropriate basis for later empirical validation.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of the integrative review and discusses their meaning. It first synthesizes the literature (Section 3.1), then develops the conceptual model (Section 3.2), research propositions (Section 3.3) and an illustrative application (Section 3.4). It then discusses the findings (Section 3.5) and their implications (Section 3.6), and closes with the limitations of the study (Section 3.7) and directions for future research (Section 3.8).

3.1 Literature Synthesis

This section synthesizes the literature in five areas: e-commerce analytics, consumer insight in sports markets, data-driven new product development, data-driven marketing, and the theories that explain how these elements create value. It closes by identifying the gaps that the conceptual model addresses.

3.1.1 E-Commerce Analytics

E-commerce analytics refers to the collection, integration and analysis of data generated through online retail interactions in order to support decision making. Chen, Chiang and Storey (2012) describe the evolution of business intelligence and analytics from structured, transaction-based reporting toward the analysis of web, mobile and unstructured content. In e-commerce, Akter and Wamba (2016) identify applications that include personalization, dynamic pricing, customer segmentation, recommendation and supply chain coordination. Analytics is commonly classified

into four levels: descriptive (what happened), diagnostic (why it happened), predictive (what is likely to happen) and prescriptive (what should be done) (Davenport & Harris, 2007).

Key techniques include clickstream and funnel analysis, market basket analysis, customer lifetime value (CLV) modeling, recommender systems (Ricci et al., 2015), online controlled experiments or A/B tests (Kohavi et al., 2020), and text mining of reviews and social content (Liu, 2012; Netzer et al., 2012). Evidence suggests that firms deploying marketing analytics achieve superior performance, particularly in competitive and fast-changing industries (Germann et al., 2013). Nevertheless, the literature also stresses that technology alone does not create value; it must be combined with skills, processes and a supportive culture (Gupta & George, 2016).

Recent contributions extend these foundations in ways that are directly relevant to sports e-commerce. Predictive analytics has been applied to supply chain demand forecasting and inventory efficiency (Aifuwa et al., 2020), to machine learning-based revenue projection (Tonoyan et al., 2021a) and to operational resource allocation (Unamma et al., 2018b). Related work applies forecasting to retail cash flow and working capital (Tonoyan et al., 2021b). Because sports demand is seasonal and event-driven, these forecasting approaches are especially valuable for production planning and inventory allocation.

Descriptive and diagnostic analytics depend on effective visualization. Business intelligence dashboards for strategic marketing governance (Sanni & Atima, 2021b) and integrated data visualization models for continuous performance monitoring (Ogbole et al., 2021) illustrate how organizations make data accessible to decision makers. Studies of Tableau-based profitability analysis in retail procurement and of business intelligence tools in facility management show similar benefits in adjacent functions (Akin-Oluyomi et al., 2020; Izuchukwu et al., 2020).

The quality of analytics rests on data integration and infrastructure. Conceptual models for ETL design in CRM-centric architectures (Badmus et al., 2019a), single-source-of-truth data quality frameworks (Unamma et al., 2019a) and governance architectures for interoperability and advanced analytics (Ilodigwe & Adesemoye, 2021) address how disparate sources are combined. Cloud research adds models for scalable and secure architectures, machine learning-based resource scaling and scalable digital infrastructure for resource-constrained organizations (Ahmed & Odejobi, 2018a; Ahmed et al., 2020; Ibe et al., 2021), which matter for e-commerce sites that face

traffic spikes around product launches and major sporting events. A predictive maintenance model designed specifically for e-commerce systems demonstrates how machine learning and cloud analytics can protect platform availability (Mayo et al., 2021).

Advanced techniques for unstructured and behavioral data are also maturing. Natural language processing has been applied to extract meaning from unstructured records (Iziduh et al., 2020), a capability that underpins review and social media mining. Machine learning and data mining have been reviewed for fraud detection (Unamma, Iziduh, et al., 2021), anomaly detection (Okwesa et al., 2020), anti-money laundering and credit risk prediction (Ashore-Onisemo et al., 2020; Atakpa, 2021), feature selection in prediction tasks (Atakpa & Abolaji, 2021) and industrial process control (Adaramola et al., 2020), showing how the same techniques can be adapted to protect and understand e-commerce transactions.

3.1.2 Consumer Insight in Sports Markets

Consumer insight can be defined as a non-obvious understanding of consumer needs, motivations and behaviors that can be acted upon to create value. It differs from raw data or information because it explains *why* consumers behave as they do and suggests *what* the firm can do about it. In sports markets, consumer insight must account for several layers of motivation. Functional motives relate to performance and injury prevention. Symbolic motives relate to identity, including identification with a team, athlete or sporting subculture (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). Hedonic and social motives relate to enjoyment, community and belonging (Mastromartino & Zhang, 2020).

The psychological continuum model (Funk & James, 2001) describes how individuals progress from awareness through attraction and attachment to allegiance with a sport object. This progression has direct implications for e-commerce: consumers at different stages respond to different products, messages and price points. Moreover, the growth of athleisure has blurred the line between performance and lifestyle consumption, meaning that the same product may be bought by a marathon runner and by a consumer who never runs. Digital data can help distinguish these segments, but only if analysts interpret behavior in the light of sport-specific theory.

Customer analytics research from adjacent industries offers transferable lessons. Geomarketing analytics for retail expansion shows how spatial data inform market penetration (Seyi-Lande et al.,

2020), and predictive churn and lifecycle value models (Oziri et al., 2020) are directly applicable to sports brands seeking to grow lifetime value. Work on first-contact resolution in technology support (Wikiri, 2021) shows that service interactions are themselves a rich source of insight. Complaint data have proved valuable for detecting systemic problems, as shown by typologies of digital complaint-resolution systems and predictive compliance monitoring based on consumer complaint data (Adeyelu, 2018; Unamma et al., 2019b).

Insight generation also requires sensitivity to culture and identity. Work on cross-cultural communication highlights how identity and diversity shape interaction (Lilian et al., 2020), a point that applies to global sports brands marketing to fans with distinct local loyalties. Research on coaching education and career transition pathways offers insight into the athletic communities that sports brands serve (Ogbona et al., 2020a).

3.1.3 Data-Driven New Product Development

Traditional new product development (NPD) models, such as the Stage-Gate process (Cooper, 1990), rely on market research at discrete points: idea screening, concept testing and launch evaluation. Data-rich environments allow these activities to become continuous. Bharadwaj and Noble (2017) argue that data can inform innovation by revealing latent needs, enabling rapid testing and supporting more precise targeting at launch. Wu, Hitt and Lou (2020) find that data analytics capabilities are associated with greater innovation, especially innovation that recombines existing knowledge.

In sports, user innovation is a well-documented phenomenon. Von Hippel (1986) identified lead users whose needs anticipate the broader market, and Füller et al. (2007) showed that online basketball communities generate product ideas of considerable value. E-commerce platforms extend these possibilities: product reviews, return reasons, search queries and community posts reveal unmet needs and pain points at scale. Sizing and fit, for example, remain a major cause of returns in footwear and apparel, and data on returns can directly inform specification decisions.

Empirical and conceptual studies outside sport illustrate how these principles operate. A study of stage-gate innovation in a West African coffee portfolio shows how structured innovation processes support organic growth (Agyei, 2021), and a hybrid Stage-Gate and Agile model demonstrates how traditional gates can be combined with iterative development (Uwagboe et al.,

2021). A review of product management strategies in mobile network rollouts provides further evidence on managing products across their lifecycle (Sanni et al., 2020c), and research on product design for new market growth and on value-proposition design in partnership ecosystems emphasizes the role of customer insight in shaping offerings (Agboada et al., 2020; Agboada, Ezeako, Okoli, & Ibeh, 2018). Studies of innovation adoption and of why scientific innovation fails to improve outcomes without effective delivery systems caution that good ideas require supportive structures to succeed (Ilodigwe & Adesemoye, 2019b; Michael & Ogunsola, 2021e).

Engineering research contributes methods for translating insight into robust specifications. Failure mode and effects analysis, reliability-centered design and reliability engineering provide structured approaches to anticipating product failures (Gideon et al., 2019; Ojeakhena et al., 2018a; Ojeakhena et al., 2018b), while frameworks for dynamic mechanical analysis in material selection are relevant to the cushioning, elasticity and durability properties that define sports footwear and equipment performance (Adewoyin et al., 2020b; Ogunnowo et al., 2021). Review data that describe product failures in use can feed directly into these engineering methods.

3.1.4 Data-Driven Marketing in the Sports Industry

Marketing analytics enables firms to move from mass communication toward personalized, real-time engagement (Wedel & Kannan, 2016). In the customer journey perspective of Lemon and Verhoef (2016), data from multiple touchpoints can be used to understand and improve the experience across pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase stages. Omnichannel retailing integrates online and physical channels to provide a seamless experience (Verhoef et al., 2015), a strategy pursued by many sports brands through app-enabled stores and click-and-collect services. Kumar and Reinartz (2016) emphasize that customer value creation is two-sided: firms create value for customers and extract value from them through loyalty and lifetime value.

Sports brands also operate within a distinctive communication ecosystem that includes athlete endorsers, team partnerships, fan communities and live events. Engagement with this ecosystem generates social and behavioral data that can be connected to purchase data. However, sports marketing scholarship has historically emphasized sponsorship effects and fan attitudes, with comparatively less attention to how transactional e-commerce data is integrated with these attitudinal signals.

A growing body of work on data-driven marketing supports these arguments. Studies have examined integrated marketing communications and subscriber growth (Agyei et al., 2018), the measurement of marketing return on investment (Sanni et al., 2020a), data-driven brand positioning (Sanni et al., 2020b), analytics-driven go-to-market frameworks (Sanni & Atima, 2021a) and audience segmentation and forecasting for targeted digital marketing (Basnet et al., 2021). Research on CRM-based sales forecasting (Dada et al., 2021b) and on CRM platform DevOps practices (Badmus et al., 2018; Badmus et al., 2020) describes the systems through which insight reaches customers.

Omnichannel and content research is particularly pertinent to sports, where athletes, fans and creators shape brand meaning. Research on omnichannel communication measured through reach overlap and journey completion (Abutu & Alawode, 2021) and on entertainment-driven communication separating narrative, music and celebrity effects (Abutu & Alawode, 2020) is relevant to athlete endorsement and campaign design. A conceptual model of the operational infrastructure that turns individual creators into scalable brands (Anyanwu, 2021) describes a channel that sports brands increasingly use to reach fans.

3.1.5 Theoretical Foundations

The framework draws on four complementary theoretical perspectives. Table 1 summarizes their roles.

Resource-Based View and Dynamic Capabilities. The resource-based view (RBV) holds that sustained competitive advantage arises from resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable (Barney, 1991). Proprietary first-party consumer data, combined with specialized analytics skills and organizational routines, can constitute such a resource bundle. Gupta and George (2016) conceptualize big data analytics capability as a combination of tangible resources (data, technology), human resources (technical and managerial skills) and intangible resources (data-driven culture, organizational learning). Dynamic capabilities theory (Teece et al., 1997) extends RBV by focusing on a firm's ability to sense opportunities, seize them and reconfigure resources in changing environments. Integrating analytics into NPD and marketing can be understood as a dynamic capability that allows sports brands to sense emerging trends and respond quickly.

Capability-based arguments are also visible in work on capital allocation and cost management through financial analytics (Lawal & Oduleye, 2021a; Oduleye & Medon, 2021). Human capital is a central element: research on strategic recruitment, technology talent development and gamification in talent management shows that analytics capability depends on people as much as technology (Akhigbe et al., 2020; Ukadike, 2019; Wikiri, 2019). Studies of data-informed digital learning platforms and data-driven operations management in education describe how organizations build these skills (Efobi et al., 2021; Orise & Niniola, 2020).

Market Orientation. Market orientation involves the organization-wide generation of market intelligence, its dissemination across departments and responsiveness to it (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). This perspective is particularly useful because it highlights that insight must not only be generated but also shared and acted on. The common failure of analytics programs, in which insight remains inside an e-commerce or data team, is in essence a failure of dissemination and responsiveness.

Research on organizational learning reinforces this view. Maturity models grounded in organizational learning, systematic reviews of how observation data are used to improve practice, and data-driven risk control models all show that intelligence creates value only when it is acted upon and embedded in routines (Arumosoye & Obriki, 2019; Arumosoye & Obriki, 2021; Obriki & Arumosoye, 2018). Standard operating procedures can serve as change infrastructure that sustains improvement (Agboada et al., 2019), and standardized change management mechanisms support adoption and sustainment (Uzondu et al., 2021).

Service-Dominant Logic and Value Co-Creation. Service-dominant logic positions customers as co-creators of value rather than passive recipients of products (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). In sports, consumers co-create value by using products in performance and social contexts, by sharing feedback and content, and by participating in brand communities. E-commerce platforms make this co-creation observable and, through reviews, customization tools and community features, actively enable it.

Sport Consumer Behavior Theory. Theories of fan identification (Wann & Branscombe, 1993) and the psychological continuum model (Funk & James, 2001) provide the sport-specific lens needed to interpret consumer data. They indicate that identical behaviors, such as purchasing a

replica jersey, may reflect very different underlying motives and levels of attachment, which should shape both product and marketing responses.

Table 1. Theoretical foundations and their role in the framework

Theory	Core idea	Role in IECACI framework
Resource-based view	Advantage from valuable, rare, inimitable resources (Barney, 1991)	Explains why first-party data and analytics skills are strategic assets
Dynamic capabilities	Sensing, seizing and reconfiguring in changing markets (Teece et al., 1997)	Frames integration as a capability for rapid response to trends and events
Market orientation	Intelligence generation, dissemination, responsiveness (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990)	Explains the flow from insight to cross-functional action
Service-dominant logic	Value is co-created with customers (Vargo & Lusch, 2004)	Positions consumers and communities as active innovation partners
Sport consumer behavior	Fan identification and psychological continuum (Funk & James, 2001)	Provides sport-specific lens for interpreting behavioral data

3.1.6 Synthesis and Research Gaps

The review reveals four gaps. First, research on e-commerce analytics is largely sector-neutral and does not reflect sport-specific consumption motives. Second, sport management research rarely examines how digital data flows into product development. Third, studies of data-driven NPD and data-driven marketing are typically conducted separately, even though both draw on the same consumer data and influence each other. Fourth, little conceptual work explains the organizational and environmental conditions under which integration succeeds. The conceptual model presented in Section 3.2 addresses each of these gaps.

A further gap concerns fulfillment. Although e-commerce outcomes depend heavily on the supply chain, research on fulfillment and returns is rarely connected to consumer insight. This is surprising given the depth of work on supply chain risk and resilience (Agbabiaka et al., 2019; Anene, 2021; Ogunwole et al., 2021), strategic sourcing and dual sourcing under volatility (Asibor et al., 2019; Asibor et al., 2021), procurement optimization, inventory availability and vendor governance (Okonkwo et al., 2018a; Okonkwo et al., 2018b; Okonkwo et al., 2019), GIS-enabled and data-driven procurement (Ahiaeke Patrick et al., 2020; Ahiaeke Patrick et al., 2021), port logistics and materials readiness (Okonkwo et al., 2020; Okonkwo, Agbabiaka, et al., 2021), and

regulatory-compliant procurement (Okonkwo, Ogunwole, et al., 2021). Studies of supplier relationship management for innovation (Ike et al., 2021), end-to-end supply chain visibility (Nnabueze et al., 2021), real-time order visibility for lead-time compression (Ebisi, Sam-Bulya, et al., 2021), data-driven logistics performance monitoring (Ijagbemi et al., 2019), procurement process automation (Akinleye & Adeyoyin, 2021), agile supply chain digital transformation (Mbonu et al., 2020a) and supply chain talent development (Falemi et al., 2020) together show how analytics can improve the operational side of e-commerce. Last-mile delivery routing on congested urban networks (Tiamiyu & Alaka, 2020) and sustainable and circular procurement (Okojie & Abioye, 2020; Okojie et al., 2020) add further dimensions, indicating that delivery and return data deserve a place in consumer insight.

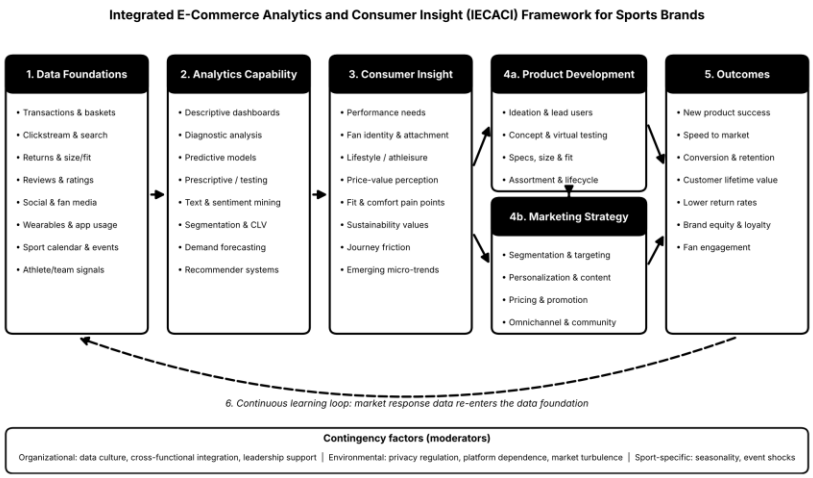

Figure 1. The Integrated E-Commerce Analytics and Consumer Insight (IECACI) framework. The double-headed arrow between 4a and 4b denotes the co-design loop between product and marketing teams.

3.2 Conceptual Model

The Integrated E-Commerce Analytics and Consumer Insight (IECACI) framework, shown in Figure 1, comprises six interconnected components: (1) data foundations, (2) analytics capability, (3) consumer insight generation, (4) strategic application in product development and marketing strategy, (5) outcomes, and (6) a continuous learning loop. A set of contingency factors moderates the relationships among these components.

3.2.1 Component 1: Data Foundations

The framework begins with the data that sports brands can access through digital channels. Four categories are distinguished. **Transactional data** include orders, basket composition, prices paid, discounts used and returns, including stated return reasons. **Behavioral data** include clickstream, on-site search terms, product views, wish-list additions, cart abandonment and app usage. **Attitudinal and social data** include ratings, reviews, questions, social media mentions and community posts. **Contextual and sport-specific data** include the sporting calendar, team and athlete performance, weather, and, where consent is given, usage data from wearables and fitness apps.

The value of these sources lies in their combination. For example, linking return reasons to product specifications and to review text can reveal whether a fit problem is systematic or confined to a size range. Data foundations therefore require integration through a unified customer and product data model, attention to data quality, and governance that complies with privacy regulations such as the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (Martin & Murphy, 2017).

Data governance is a precondition for consumer trust. Frameworks for legal and ethical risk modeling in data protection (Mbonu et al., 2018), comparative reviews of data protection regulations and secure cloud implementation (Mbonu, Aliliele, et al., 2019), privacy by design (Ominyi, 2021) and privacy-centric security engineering (Okoruwa et al., 2020) offer guidance for handling personal data responsibly. Cyber risk maturity assessments, IT governance frameworks such as COBIT and ITIL, risk-based cybersecurity assurance and identity and access management in multi-cloud environments (Fadayomi et al., 2019; Fadero et al., 2018; Fadero et al., 2021; Mbonu et al., 2020), together with risk-based business intelligence architectures, infrastructure-as-code governance and log analytics for incident response (Mbonu et al., 2020b; Mbonu et al., 2021a; Mbonu, Iwuanyanwu, et al., 2019), help protect customer data. Studies of consumer protection in global marketing law (Anichukwueze et al., 2019) and of traceability and chain-of-custody integrity (Aneke & Adesemoye, 2019), which is relevant to combating counterfeit sports merchandise, complete the governance picture.

3.2.2 Component 2: Analytics Capability

Analytics capability is the organization's ability to transform data into meaningful information. Consistent with Gupta and George (2016), it combines technology (data platforms, analytics tools),

human skills (data scientists, analysts and business translators) and intangible resources (data-driven culture). Analytical methods span the four levels: descriptive dashboards that track sales and traffic; diagnostic analyses that explain changes; predictive models for demand forecasting, churn and CLV; and prescriptive tools such as recommender systems, price optimization and experimentation. Text and sentiment mining are particularly important in sports because reviews contain detailed descriptions of product use in specific conditions, such as trail running in wet weather or indoor court play.

Capability building can draw on established process-improvement disciplines. Lean Six Sigma adapted for small enterprises (Ambali et al., 2021), lean re-engineering to reduce cycle time and revenue leakage (Ebisi, Okoli, et al., 2021) and the reframing of the cost of poor quality as a governance metric (Ashore-Onisemo et al., 2021) provide tools for embedding analytics in operations. Evidence from manufacturing shows that digital transformation, analytics and automation together improve operational performance (Obukadata et al., 2021a; Obukadata et al., 2021b), and advances in secure software testing support the reliability of analytics applications (Mbonu et al., 2021b).

3.2.3 Component 3: Consumer Insight Generation

Analytics output becomes consumer insight only when it is interpreted in context. This component represents the sense-making process in which analysts, researchers and category specialists combine quantitative patterns with qualitative understanding and sport-specific theory. Typical insight domains include performance needs, fan identity and attachment, lifestyle and athleisure motives, price and value perceptions, fit and comfort pain points, sustainability values, friction in the customer journey and emerging micro-trends. Combining digital data with traditional methods, such as interviews, ethnography and lead-user workshops, increases the depth of insight and guards against misinterpreting correlations.

3.2.4 Component 4a: Application to Product Development

Insight informs product development across four stages. In ideation, search queries that return no results, frequently requested features in reviews and lead-user community content reveal unmet needs. In concept development and testing, digital prototypes, pre-order campaigns and limited online drops allow demand to be tested before full-scale commitment. In specification, returns and fit data inform sizing, materials and construction decisions. In assortment and lifecycle

management, predictive analytics supports decisions about colorways, regional allocations and the timing of product retirement or renewal.

3.2.5 Component 4b: Application to Marketing Strategy

The same insights shape marketing strategy. Segmentation and targeting move beyond demographics toward behavioral and motivational segments, for example distinguishing performance runners from lifestyle wearers or casual from highly identified fans. Personalization and content use recommendation engines and dynamic content to match products and stories to individual interests, including favored teams and sports. Pricing and promotion use elasticity estimates and experimentation, with care to protect brand equity in premium categories. Omnichannel and community strategies connect online insight to store experiences, events and brand communities (Verhoef et al., 2015).

3.2.6 The Co-Design Loop between Product and Marketing

A central claim of the framework is that product development and marketing should not consume insight separately. When both draw on a shared insight base, products can be designed with their target segments and positioning in mind, and marketing can communicate attributes that consumers have demonstrably valued. This co-design loop reduces the risk of products that are well engineered but poorly positioned, or campaigns that promise benefits the product does not deliver.

3.2.7 Component 5: Outcomes

Integration is expected to improve outcomes at product, customer and brand levels. Product-level outcomes include new product success rates, speed to market and lower return rates. Customer-level outcomes include conversion, retention and customer lifetime value. Brand-level outcomes include brand equity, loyalty and fan engagement. Measuring these outcomes consistently is itself an analytics task and closes the loop to the data foundations.

3.2.8 Component 6: Continuous Learning Loop

Market responses to products and campaigns generate new data, which re-enter the data foundation. This feedback loop embodies the sensing and reconfiguring elements of dynamic capabilities (Teece et al., 1997). Over time, it allows sports brands to refine models, learn which insights predict success, and shift from periodic research to a continuous test-and-learn approach.

3.2.9 Contingency Factors

Three groups of moderators influence how effectively the framework operates. Organizational factors include a data-driven culture, cross-functional integration between e-commerce, product and marketing teams, and senior leadership support (Mikalef et al., 2018). Environmental factors include privacy regulation and consumer trust (Martin & Murphy, 2017), dependence on third-party marketplaces and platforms that restrict data access, and market turbulence. Sport-specific factors include seasonality, event-driven demand shocks, and the strength of fan identification within the target market.

Table 2. Mapping data sources to analytics, insights and strategic decisions

Data source	Analytics method	Example insight	Strategic decision
On-site search logs	Query analysis, zero-result tracking	Rising searches for wide-fit trail shoes with few matching products	Add wide-fit variants to trail range (NPD)
Returns and return reasons	Diagnostic analysis by size and SKU	Model runs half a size small for 40% of returners	Revise last or update size guide (NPD and marketing)
Product reviews	Sentiment and topic mining	Users praise grip but criticize heel durability	Improve heel compound; emphasize grip in messaging
Purchase history	Segmentation, CLV modeling	High-value segment buys performance and recovery products together	Bundle offers and loyalty tier for segment
Clickstream and app data	Funnel analysis, A/B testing	Customization tool increases conversion for jersey buyers	Expand personalization to more licensed products
Sport calendar and social data	Event-based forecasting	Demand for a player's jersey spikes after transfer news	Rapid production and targeted campaigns

Cross-sector evidence supports the expectation that these contingencies matter. Data-driven models in agriculture, health equity assessment and financial risk evaluation show that the benefits

of analytics depend on local infrastructure, institutional capacity and governance (Akomolafe & Agu, 2019b; Atakpa & Abolaji, 2020; Michael & Ogunsola, 2021b; Michael & Ogunsola, 2021c).

3.3 Research Propositions

Based on the framework, the following propositions are offered for empirical testing.

- **P1.** The breadth and integration of e-commerce data sources (transactional, behavioral, attitudinal and contextual) is positively associated with the quality of consumer insight generated by sports brands.
- **P2.** Analytics capability mediates the relationship between data foundations and the quality of consumer insight.
- **P3.** Consumer insight that combines digital behavioral data with sport-specific constructs, such as fan identification, is more predictive of purchase behavior than insight based on behavioral data alone.
- **P4.** The use of e-commerce-derived consumer insight in product development is positively associated with new product success and negatively associated with product return rates.
- **P5.** The use of e-commerce-derived consumer insight in marketing strategy is positively associated with conversion, retention and customer lifetime value.
- **P6.** Sports brands that apply a shared insight base to both product development and marketing (the co-design loop) achieve stronger outcomes than brands that apply insight to only one function.
- **P7.** Organizational factors, particularly data-driven culture and cross-functional integration, positively moderate the relationship between consumer insight and strategic application.
- **P8.** Privacy concerns and dependence on third-party platforms negatively moderate the relationship between data foundations and analytics capability, whereas strong seasonality and event-driven demand increase the value of predictive analytics.

3.4 Illustrative Application: A Running Footwear Line

To demonstrate the framework, consider a hypothetical mid-sized sports brand that sells running footwear through its own website, a mobile app and third-party marketplaces.

Data foundations. The brand integrates order and return records, on-site search logs, product reviews, app engagement data and, with consent, run data from a partner fitness app. **Analytics capability.** A small cross-functional analytics team builds dashboards, applies topic modeling to reviews and develops a demand forecasting model sensitive to the race calendar.

Consumer insight. The analysis reveals three insights. First, a growing group of urban runners searches for shoes suitable for both road running and daily wear. Second, a flagship model has a high return rate concentrated among customers with wide feet, and reviews repeatedly mention pressure on the forefoot. Third, runners who log long distances in the partner app replace shoes at predictable intervals, but many are not reminded to repurchase.

Product development. The brand introduces a wide-fit version of the flagship model, tests a hybrid road-to-street concept through a limited online drop, and uses pre-order data to set production volumes. **Marketing strategy.** It creates a hybrid-runner segment with dedicated content, adds a fit-finder tool to the product page, and launches replenishment reminders based on logged mileage. Because the product and marketing teams share the same insight base, the hybrid shoe is positioned around the versatility consumers described in their own words.

Outcomes and learning. Returns fall for the flagship model, the hybrid drop sells out and informs a full-scale launch, and replenishment reminders increase repeat purchases. New data from these initiatives enter the data foundation, refining the next cycle. The case also illustrates contingencies: data from third-party marketplaces are limited, and the fitness app partnership depends on clear consent and value exchange with consumers.

3.5 Discussion

This paper set out to explain how e-commerce analytics and consumer insight can be integrated into sports product development and marketing strategy. In response to the first research question, the conceptual model shows that value depends on combining transactional, behavioral, attitudinal and contextual data, and on an analytics capability that spans descriptive to prescriptive methods. This is consistent with research showing that analytics capability is a bundle of technology, skills and culture rather than a technology investment alone (Gupta & George, 2016; Mikalef et al., 2018), and with work stressing that data integration and quality are preconditions for reliable insight (Badmus et al., 2019a; Ilodigwe & Adesemoye, 2021; Unamma et al., 2019a).

In response to the second research question, the model identifies consumer insight as the mechanism that links analytics to strategic action. Much of the existing literature treats the relationship between data and performance as direct (Germann et al., 2013; Wu et al., 2020). The framework instead proposes that data create value only when they are interpreted in context and disseminated to product and marketing teams, which is consistent with market orientation theory (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990) and with organizational learning research showing that intelligence must be embedded in routines (Agboada et al., 2019; Arumosoye & Obriki, 2021). A distinctive feature of the model is the co-design loop. Studies of data-driven innovation and data-driven marketing have largely developed separately (Bharadwaj & Noble, 2017; Wedel & Kannan, 2016), yet in sports markets the same review, return or search data can inform both a product specification and the message used to sell it. Treating these as one insight base reduces the risk of misalignment between what is built and what is promised.

In response to the third research question, the model highlights organizational, environmental and sport-specific contingencies. The emphasis on data culture and cross-functional integration echoes the literature on change management and governance alignment (Eyetsemitan et al., 2020; Uzondu et al., 2021), while the emphasis on privacy reflects growing regulatory attention to personal data (Martin & Murphy, 2017) and to the data protection frameworks reviewed earlier (Mbonu et al., 2018; Mbonu, Aliliele, et al., 2019). The sport-specific contingencies, namely seasonality, event-driven demand and fan identification, are what most clearly distinguish the framework from generic e-commerce models. Fan identification theory (Funk & James, 2001; Wann & Branscombe, 1993) suggests that the same purchase can signal very different motives, so behavioral data alone may mislead unless interpreted through a sport-specific lens.

The framework also extends the discussion of e-commerce analytics to fulfillment. Returns, delivery performance and inventory availability are often managed by operations teams, yet they shape customer experience and generate valuable insight, particularly for size-sensitive categories such as footwear and apparel. Linking supply chain visibility and resilience research (Anene, 2021; Nnabueze et al., 2021) with consumer insight is therefore a further contribution. Taken together, these points position the IECACI framework as an integrative model that connects previously separate streams of research and adapts them to the realities of sports markets.

3.6 Implications

3.6.1 Theoretical Implications

The framework extends the big data analytics capability literature (Gupta & George, 2016; Mikalef et al., 2018) by specifying how capability translates into value through consumer insight and through two distinct but connected strategic applications. It contributes to sport management by bringing digital commerce and product innovation into a field that has focused largely on fan attitudes and sponsorship. It also connects market orientation theory with contemporary analytics, highlighting dissemination and responsiveness as the critical links that many analytics initiatives neglect. Finally, it proposes that sport-specific constructs improve the interpretation of behavioral data, inviting research that combines psychometric and behavioral measures.

3.6.2 Managerial Implications

For managers, the framework suggests a phased implementation roadmap, summarized in Table 3. The guiding principle is that analytics investments should be organized around decisions rather than tools: each data initiative should be linked to a specific product or marketing decision and to a measurable outcome.

Table 3. Phased implementation roadmap for sports brands

Phase	Key actions	Indicators of progress
1. Foundation	Audit data sources; build unified customer and product data model; establish consent and governance	Share of revenue with linked customer data; data quality scores
2. Capability	Develop descriptive and diagnostic analytics; recruit analysts and business translators; start review mining	Dashboard adoption; time to answer business questions
3. Integration	Create shared insight forums for e-commerce, product and marketing teams; embed insight checkpoints in Stage-Gate reviews	Number of product and campaign decisions citing insight
4. Optimization	Introduce predictive and prescriptive models; run systematic experiments; close the learning loop	New product success rate; return rate; CLV growth

Managers should also take several cautions into account. Over-reliance on historical data can bias development toward incremental products, so data should complement rather than replace creative design and lead-user engagement. Personalization must respect consumer privacy and avoid perceptions of intrusiveness. Smaller sports brands with limited resources can begin with low-cost sources, such as reviews and search logs, which often provide high-value insight.

3.7 Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, as a conceptual paper, it has not empirically tested the framework or its propositions, and the relationships it proposes should be treated as theoretically grounded expectations rather than established findings. Second, the framework was developed primarily with footwear, apparel and licensed merchandise in mind; its applicability to sports equipment, sports services and connected fitness devices may be more limited. Third, the literature synthesis was restricted to sources published up to 2021 and drew substantially on work from emerging-market contexts, which strengthens its relevance to those settings but may underrepresent practices in other regions. Fourth, the illustrative application is hypothetical and is intended to demonstrate the logic of the model rather than to provide evidence of its effectiveness. Finally, the rapid evolution of digital commerce means that some data sources and analytical techniques discussed here may change quickly.

3.8 Future Research

Future research could validate the propositions through surveys of sports brand managers using structural equation modeling, through case studies of firms at different stages of analytics maturity, or through field experiments that compare insight-informed and conventional product launches. Comparative studies could also test whether the framework applies beyond footwear and apparel, to sports equipment, sports services and connected fitness devices.

Further research is also needed on several specific questions: how sport-specific constructs such as fan identification can be inferred ethically from digital behavior; how artificial intelligence and machine learning change the balance between human and automated insight generation; how sustainability concerns, increasingly visible in reviews and social media, should be integrated into data-driven product development; and how brands in emerging markets, where marketplace platforms and mobile commerce dominate, can build first-party data foundations. Finally,

longitudinal research could assess whether the post-pandemic shift toward digital channels proves durable and how it alters the value of e-commerce analytics in the sports sector.

4. CONCLUSION

Sports brands today have access to more consumer data than at any previous time, yet the competitive advantage lies not in data volume but in the ability to convert data into insight and insight into better products and marketing. This paper has proposed the IECACI framework, which links data foundations, analytics capability, consumer insight, product development, marketing strategy and outcomes in a continuous learning cycle, moderated by organizational, environmental and sport-specific factors. By integrating perspectives from strategic management, marketing and sport consumer behavior, the framework provides a basis for empirical research and a practical guide for sports organizations seeking to compete in increasingly digital markets.

In summary, the study finds that sports brands create value from e-commerce data when four conditions are met: diverse data sources are integrated and governed responsibly; analytics capability spans people, processes and technology; insight is interpreted through a sport-specific lens; and a single insight base informs both product development and marketing. Sports brands are therefore advised to organize analytics around specific product and marketing decisions, to bring e-commerce, product and marketing teams into shared insight routines, and to treat returns, reviews and search data as inputs to design as well as to sales. Empirical testing of the propositions offered here is the logical next step.

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