

BOOK REVIEW

Sports Equipment Innovation. A Study of Italian and French Cases. **By Raffaele Cecere. Hardcover, Softcover and eBook.** **ISBN: 978-981-97-9970-1/ 978-981-97-9973-2/ 978-981-97-9971-8.** **Palgrave Macmillan Singapore (2025) (first edition).**

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This book was written by Raffaele Cecere, Applied Scientist at the Institute for High Performance Computing and Networking (ICAR) of the National Research Council of Italy (CNR). Moreover, Raffaele Cecere is PhD in Entrepreneurship and Innovation. The book highlights the ways in which companies that produce products and services for sports implement innovative processes. The goals of the book are to offer a tool for scholars, managers, and entrepreneurs engaged in the sports sector. For this reason, the book offers various levels of analysis.

In particular, the author conducted a bibliometric analysis to accurately describe the state of the art and provide the most comprehensive possible view of the concept of innovation related to sports (Chapter 2). Additionally, the author conducted a systematic literature review (Chapter 3) of studies that have linked the concept of innovation to sports from different perspectives and stakeholders (e.g., technical equipment companies, sports organizations, individuals) as well as different areas of focus, including entrepreneurship, technology, social issues, and management.

Furthermore, based on the constructs derived from the literature review, a conceptual model (Chapter 4) was created on the innovation processes of companies that produce sports equipment and services. This model serves as an essential tool for building empirical analysis and addressing some of the gaps identified in previous studies. In Chapters 5 (methodology) and 6 (results), the author presents the empirical analysis involving 10 Italian and French companies, investigating both innovative processes and knowledge management practices.

Finally, the book's conclusions (Chapter 7) address the limitations of the research and provide trajectories for future researchers working on innovation, entrepreneurship, marketing, and management in the sports sector, with a focus on companies that produce goods and services for sports. From a practical standpoint, the conclusions also offer suggestions and best practices for managers and specialists in the field.

This book is strongly connected to the previous literature and offers many new insights for future research. In particular, it refers to the literature on lead user innovation in the context of new product development, new sports disciplines, idea generation, and other activities such as testing and marketing. In addition, there is a growing body of literature on embedded users, employees who are both receptors of innovative technologies and participants with passion and knowledge in the conception, design, and testing phases of new products. Other interesting links relate to the issues of collaboration and cooptation between firms, as well as the importance of social networks in establishing communication between firms and customers. In addition, the literature reviewed highlights the importance of an agile business model to meet market challenges, the management of knowledge gained from innovative processes, and the involvement of external stakeholders.

The book analyzes in detail companies in the Italian and French cultural contexts. However, future studies could include a comparison between rich and poor countries to examine the differences from

an entrepreneurial perspective and the exploitation of business opportunities, aiming to capture the main differences. Other studies could focus on the impact and stimulus in terms of entrepreneurship and innovation in sport policies and sport marketing activities on the creation of new businesses and the influence of sport on other sectors, such as tourism and sport related services. Both qualitative and quantitative analyses could be essential to address these interdisciplinary approaches.

The theoretical model in Chapter 6 is particularly interesting, as it serves as a useful tool for scholars, entrepreneurs, and managers engaged in the sports products and services market. Additionally, although this book has an academic slant it turns out to be an adequate textbook even for those outside academic settings or anyone interested in the topic.