

STUDY ON THE IMPACT AND COUNTERMEASURES OF CROSS-BORDER E-COMMERCE ON FOOTWEAR EXPORT ENTERPRISES IN DONGGUAN CITY

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ABSTRACT

With the development of high-tech information technology and the Internet, as well as the continuous acceleration of globalization in the post-epidemic era, e-commerce has gradually become a new economic growth point and foreign trade model in China. The development of cross-border e-commerce has also gradually changed the traditional pattern of world trade. Based on the development of cross-border e-commerce of footwear export enterprises in Dongguan, Gguangdong province, China, this paper discusses the impact of cross-border e-commerce on the development of traditional footwear export enterprises. Firstly, the development status of cross-border e-commerce at home and abroad and the development status of footwear export enterprises in Dongguan City were analyzed. This paper focuses on the impact of cross-border e-commerce on the development of footwear export enterprises in Dongguan, including broadening trade objects, simplifying transaction processes, saving cross-border transaction costs, and improving transaction efficiency. Finally, the corresponding solutions and suggestions are put forward for the problems existing in the development of cross-border e-commerce enterprises in Dongguan footwear export enterprises. This paper aims to provide reference and inspiration for the development of cross-border e-commerce in the footwear industry and promote the industry's sustainable development.

Keywords: Cross-border E-commerce, Footwear Manufacturing, Export Trade.

1. INTRODUCTION

In this section, the research background of the thesis, the literature review, and the significance of the study will be represented.

1.1 Research Background

With the integrated development of the global economy, the rapid growth of Internet information technology, and the impact of the worldwide epidemic, e-commerce has gradually crossed national borders and played a huge role in international trade. E-commerce is conducive to broadening trade objects, simplifying transaction processes, saving cross-border transaction costs, and improving transaction efficiency. Cross-border e-commerce has emerged as a new economic growth model and growth point for international trade. After the impact of the global new crown epidemic, traditional trade urgently needs to resume production and development, and cross-border e-commerce can well meet this demand and change the traditional trade pattern. Currently, China's foreign trade companies are vigorously developing cross-border e-commerce businesses to increase international trade competitiveness.

According to customs data and government reports, 2.14 billion individuals engaged in online purchasing in 2021, with global online sales accounting for 22% of total retail sales, making cross-

border e-commerce a critical component of international trade. At the same time, cross-border e-commerce offers a promising avenue for the transformation of traditional foreign trade. Dongguan City in Guangdong Province, China, renowned as a footwear production hub with numerous footwear exporters has faced challenges in recent years due to fluctuating demand and the impact of global pandemics on the traditional footwear sector. The rapid expansion of cross-border e-commerce offers a new direction for traditional Dongguan footwear exporters.

1.2 Literature Review

“By analyzing the status quo and characteristics of cross-border e-commerce in China, Yujing Wang and Shujian Yang conclude that China’s cross-border e-commerce platform rules and systems are not uniform, cross-border e-commerce payment and settlement methods are scattered, cross-border e-commerce brand building is weak, cross-border e-commerce small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are in fierce competition as well as cross-border e-commerce transportation costs continue to climb, and so on., and put forward feasible suggestions to address the above problems.”

Ye Tiantian analyzes the influencing factors of cross-border e-commerce development in the era of big data from three aspects: internal operation, external marketing, and leadership decision-making, and puts forward the problems in the development of cross-border e-commerce in the era of big data, such as imperfect logistics system, imperfect enterprise credit evaluation system, and the lack of professional talents. It is concluded that the scale of cross-border e-commerce development in the era of big data is expanding to meet the needs of consumers, improve the decision-making efficiency of cross-border e-commerce enterprises, and promote the healthy growth of enterprises.

Chen Hongfei believes that although China’s cross-border e-commerce is developing rapidly, there still needs to be a particular gap between the scale of cross-border e-commerce transactions and related trade in China compared with that in developed countries and regions. “The development of cross-border e-commerce in China is still in the initial stage, and the cross-border e-commerce development system is still immature and perfect.”

By comparing the development mode of cross-border e-commerce with the traditional foreign trade mode, Wang Zhiyong puts forward the strategy of synergistic development of cross-border e-commerce and traditional foreign trade mode, which promotes the high-quality development of China’s foreign trade economy and enhances the efficiency of China’s foreign trade economic development.

Feng Lin detailed the current cross-border e-commerce trade mode mainly based on B2B and B2C, the product cross-border trade process, and pointed out the various bottlenecks foreign trade enterprises face in developing cross-border e-commerce.

Duan Yuxin, Lin Zhigang, and Zhang Fan elaborated on the construction of “six systems and two platforms” in cross-border e-commerce integrated and pilot zones, i.e., information sharing system, financial service system, intelligent logistics system, cross-border e-commerce credit system, cross-border e-commerce statistics and monitoring system, risk prevention system, cross-border e-commerce online integrated service platform, and cross-border e-commerce offline industrial park platform. Industrial Park Platform. It also puts forward corresponding solutions to the problems faced by China’s cross-border e-commerce, such as poor industry ecological environment, non-adaptation of international economic and trade rules, lack of comprehensive cross-border e-commerce platforms, and rising factor costs.

Wang Xin analyzes the policy, status quo, and platform advantages of cross-border e-commerce enterprise development in China, as well as the problems of unsound laws and regulations, slow development of international logistics, uneven personal purchasing overseas, and significant differences in consumer groups, etc., and puts forward suggestions to promote the development of cross-border e-commerce enterprises in China through the government and the enterprises.

Yun Fang, Zeng Xiaomin, Liao Xueming, and Zhang Qiuting analyze the enterprises' perception of the integration and development of cross-border e-commerce and traditional industries through the questionnaire and point out the necessity and risk of the transformation and development of manufacturing enterprises to cross-border e-commerce.

Wei Liping and Xing Wenxiang believe that cross-border e-commerce can help accelerate brand internationalization and reduce the cost of brand internationalization.

Chen Xiaofei establishes a pricing model for bonded and overseas warehouse modes by considering the logistics level and commodity purchase price, then compares the profit to provide a reference for merchants and cross-border e-commerce platforms to choose which logistics mode.

Wang Liye, by analyzing the current leather industry export status quo, from manufacturing technology barriers, animal welfare barriers, and green trade barriers, three aspects of China's leather industry overseas development of trade barriers and higher requirements of the restrictions, and forced China's leather industry for technological innovation, product quality improvement, and to promote the traditional leather industry, digital, scientific and technological, green transformation, and development.

Through the investigation and research, Li Xiaoliang and Jiang Yifu concluded that China's cross-border e-commerce professionals have a large gap between the quantity and quality of talent and cannot meet the development needs of the cross-border e-commerce market. They are proposed through the combination of theory and practice, school-enterprise cooperation, industry-teaching integration, and reform of the curriculum assessment system to solve the problem of talent training and shortage.

Hu Linqing analyses the macro environment of the development of cross-border e-commerce in China's footwear and apparel companies and points out the feasibility of international e-commerce development in footwear and apparel companies from three dimensions, namely, market scale, policy support, and information technology of the industry. By analyzing the development status quo of the cross-border e-commerce business of China's footwear and apparel companies, we need to improve in three aspects, namely, product, operation, and logistics, and conclude that China's footwear and apparel companies must develop a cross-border e-commerce business.

"Yun Xu analyses the characteristics of major cross-border e-commerce platforms to provide a reference for footwear exporters to choose a cross-border e-commerce platform that suits their development situation."

"Chen Wangfang adopted the SWOT analysis method to comprehensively understand the development status of China's footwear industry in the context of cross-border e-commerce. It also provides strategic analysis and a reference basis for the steady development of cross-border e-commerce in China's footwear industry."

Yan Lu analyses the post-epidemic era, the development of domestic and foreign leather trade by the impact of the epidemic, with the help of cross-border e-commerce to broaden the international market, stimulate the leather enterprise technological innovation, improve product

quality, and meet the international market demand. The conclusion: Cross-border e-commerce is a leather industry development that must be addressed as an essential force.

Chen Qi analyzes the advantages of cross-border e-commerce and leather products export status quo, sorting out cross-border e-commerce for leather products export opportunities, as well as the leather industry in the cross-border e-commerce background needs to face the challenges, and targeted to put forward specific enhancement strategies and recommendations for the development of China's leather industry in the foreign trade to clear up the shortcomings and improve the idea, and for the development of cross-border e-commerce for the leather industry to provide a reference.

Liang Muling, Chen Feng, Chen Youdong, Dai Jiaqi, and Huang Li analyze the cross-border e-commerce merchants, platforms, payment, logistics, and other links in the industry chain under the background of digital trade in Guangdong Province and put forward the construction of the e-commerce industrial park integrating sources, platforms, warehousing and logistics, vigorously develops the digital ecological industry chain, and accelerates the digital transformation and upgrading of the cross-border e-commerce industry chain.

“Guo Meng, based on Dongguan cross-border e-commerce comprehensive pilot zone on cross-border e-commerce and the current situation of Dongguan's foreign trade through the four aspects of trade structure, trade products, trade objects, trade processes, analyzing Dongguan City, cross-border e-commerce on the transformation and upgrading of foreign trade has an impact.”

Regarding the research on cross-border e-commerce, foreign countries mainly compare cross-border e-commerce with traditional e-commerce or traditional foreign trade and analyze the cost advantages, information advantages and opportunities, and challenges for SMEs that cross-border e-commerce possesses.

Some scholars point out that cross-border e-commerce is a more advanced form of transaction, and the international payment, tax clearance, international transport, and transport insurance involved in the transaction process constitute the difference from traditional e-commerce. Some scholars also emphasized the cornerstone role played by electronic information technology in cross-border e-commerce and pointed out that this new technology expanded the scope of trade and created entirely new markets.

1.3 Research Significance

Cross-border e-commerce, as a new type of e-commerce, creates new platforms and opportunities for worldwide trade and has emerged as a new economic growth driver to boost global trade development. However, the rise of cross-border e-commerce has created opportunities for traditional footwear exports while also posing substantial consequences and challenges to traditional footwear exporters. Dongguan City, Guangdong Province, China, as a critical footwear production base, has seen a wave of closures, industrial transformation, and upgrading of its traditional footwear exporters in the face of repeated epidemic impacts and new cross-border e-commerce development, which is of great reference significance and research value for the healthy and sustainable development of footwear exporters. This paper aims to analyze the impact of cross-border e-commerce on Dongguan's footwear export enterprises by investigating and studying the role of cross-border e-commerce in promoting the traditional manufacturing industry and the impediments in the development process. The specific research content is as follows:

Analyze the Development of Cross-border E-commerce and Footwear Export Enterprises in Dongguan City

Analyze the impact and promotion of cross-border e-commerce on Dongguan's footwear export enterprises.

Analyze the difficulties and challenges in developing the cross-border e-commerce business of Dongguan footwear export enterprises.

Provide a development strategy and offer suggestions for cross-border e-commerce in the footwear industry, aiming to serve as a reference for the growth of Dongguan's footwear export enterprises' cross-border e-commerce businesses.

2. STATUS OF CROSS-BORDER E-COMMERCE DEVELOPMENT AT HOME AND ABROAD

2.1 Definition of Cross-border E-commerce

Cross-border e-commerce refers to international commercial activity between trading entities in different national boundaries and geographic areas to conclude transactions utilizing e-commerce, online ordering, payment and settlement, and delivery of goods through cross-border logistics, customs clearance, and final delivery to complete the transaction.

Cross-border e-commerce trade methods and modes are diversified and mainly divided into B2B (business to business) and B2C (business to consumer) according to trade objects. The trade flow of different trade modes is shown in Fig1:

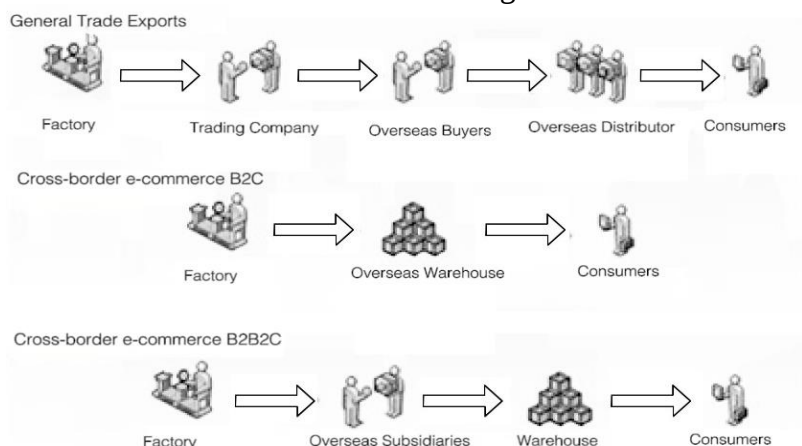


Figure. 1 The export mode of trade

Among them, the B2B transaction mode accounts for a relatively high proportion, with the B2B transaction mode of cross-border e-commerce accounting for 75.6% and the B2C transaction mode accounting for 24.4% in 2022 (Figure 2).

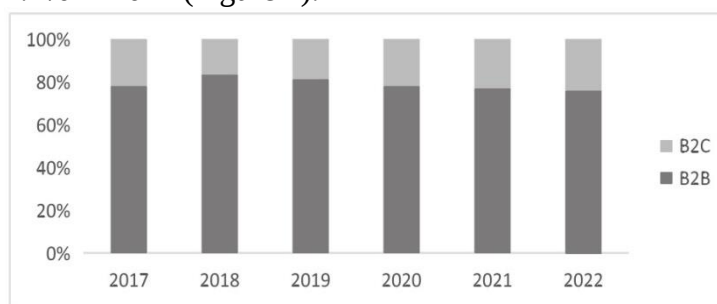


Figure 2 China's cross-border e-commerce, 2017-2022

2.2 Current Situation of Cross-border E-commerce at Home

Cross-border e-commerce, a new form of foreign trade, has evolved rapidly in recent years. Particularly, during the COVID-19 pandemic and in the post-epidemic era, cross-border e-commerce has emerged as a crucial channel for global trade. The market size of cross-border e-commerce is expanding, with an increasing number of participants from various industries engaging in different types of trade. "China has recognized the significant potential of cross-border e-commerce and has provided comprehensive attention and support at the national level, aligning with the trend of its development." According to data from China Customs, the scale of China's cross-border e-commerce import and export accounted for 4.9% of the country's total trade in goods in 2022, totaling RMB 2.1 trillion and increasing by 7.1% compared to the previous year. As a major manufacturing hub, China has embraced cross-border e-commerce as a key marketing model due to several factors. Firstly, the domestic e-commerce market is mature and highly competitive. Secondly, Chinese products are gaining increasing recognition globally, thanks to the country's manufacturing prowess and expanding international influence. Lastly, cross-border e-commerce offers higher profit margins compared to domestic e-commerce, driving its rapid growth." At the same time, domestic cross-border e-commerce platforms, like AliExpress, Amazon, and eBay are rapidly growing and expanding into overseas markets. The products of Dongguan footwear are exported to Asia, Europe, Latin America, and other regions or countries with the help of a cross-border e-commerce platform. There is still a disparity in the scale of cross-border e-commerce transactions and related trade compared with developed countries and regions. The primary causes of the unsatisfactory growth of the industrial and supply chain are a lack of trained professionals, an ineffective policy system, cross-border logistics, cross-border payments, and a lagging industry development. In comparison to wealthy nations, China is still in its infancy when it comes to cross-border e-commerce, despite recent successes and experience. Consequently, China offers enormous opportunities for the growth of international e-commerce enterprises.

2.2.1 Status of cross-border e-commerce development in Dongguan

Since July 2018, Dongguan City in Guangdong Province has been designated as the third batch of national comprehensive cross-border e-commerce pilot zones. It has made every effort to encourage the use of cross-border e-commerce. It has implemented relevant policies in five dimensions, such as development planning, special funds, public service platforms, innovation in institutional mechanisms, and park management, among others, to promote Dongguan's acceleration of the formation of the entire industrial chain of manufacturing, trading, collection, payment, logistics, settlement, and so on. The 'closed-loop' cross-border e-commerce ecosystem constantly promotes the advancement of cross-border e-commerce to new heights. Dongguan's cross-border e-commerce import and export volume has reached about 400 billion yuan thanks to the combined efforts of several parties, with the country ranking first in terms of total import and export. Dongguan's cross-border e-commerce imports and exports totaled 37.01 billion yuan in 2018, representing a 133% rise year on year and ranking first in the country. In 2019, the city's cross-border e-commerce imports and exports totaled 41.92 billion yuan, with 39.90 billion yuan exported, ranking first in the country. In 2020, the city's cross-border e-commerce imports and exports were 38.056 billion yuan, with 36.218 billion exported and 1.838 billion imported. Dongguan's cross-border e-commerce imports and exports hit 73 billion yuan in 2021, up 91.8%

year on year and ranking top in the province. Cross-border e-commerce imports and exports reached 81.86 billion yuan in 2022, growing at an annual pace of 11.3%, placing it at the forefront of the nation. Dongguan's cross-border e-commerce imports and exports totaled 90.72 billion yuan in 2023, representing a 10.8% year-on-year increase and placing fourth in the province. Given the increasing rise of cross-border e-commerce, Dongguan City has repeatedly implemented regulations to 'stabilize international trade and strengthen e-commerce.' Dongguan manufacturing businesses are increasingly opting to 'go to sea.' Building digital capabilities is urgently needed at the same time. Dongguan City will undergo a change in e-commerce regulations in 2024. To attract cross-border e-commerce B2B, live e-commerce, independent stations, overseas warehouses, park clustering, and other dimensions of the research and introduction of a new series of cross-border e-commerce industry support policies, Dongguan City, a new round of e-commerce policy conversion period, will be benchmarked against the national requirements for the high-quality development of foreign trade around the platform. Furthermore, the outbreak of COVID-19 had a negative influence on output and offline consumption in 2020. For example, in 2020, Dongguan footwear manufacturing output of 120 million pairs, a 37.5% reduction, and export amount of 8.66 billion yuan, a 41.7% decline, the post-epidemic age of the resumption of production and consumption of the return to online consumption of global potential. At the same time, strong national policies will encourage the rapid growth of cross-border e-commerce. Cross-border e-commerce is on the rise, thanks to strong support from national policies.

2.3 Current Situation of Cross-border E-commerce Abroad

The rapid advancement of information technology and the Internet economy has led to a significant increase in the number of Internet users globally in recent years, resulting in a surge in online shopping popularity. The global spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions on physical store operations have further fueled the shift towards online shopping, prompting a growing number of enterprises, brands, and new retail platforms to enter the e-commerce market. The global e-commerce market has seen substantial growth, with the retail e-commerce market nearly tripling in size from 2014 to 2022. It is estimated that there are currently between 120,000 to 240,000 online retailers worldwide, with an expected 2.14 billion users engaging in online transactions. In the United States, 70% of consumers now prefer online shopping. In 2015, the average global customer spent approximately \$1,060 on online purchases, and by 2021, the average online purchase expenditure had risen to \$2,310. These figures are even higher in certain countries, with UK digital shoppers spending over £4,200 annually. According to data, global retail e-commerce sales reached approximately 5.2 trillion US dollars in 2021. According to eMarketer, that figure will rise by 56% in the coming years, hitting \$8.1 trillion by 2026. The continuous growth of the global e-commerce market is largely driven by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, as consumers increasingly turn to online shopping. Significant expansion of the worldwide e-commerce market is expected in the upcoming years.

3. CURRENT SITUATION OF FOOTWEAR EXPORT ENTERPRISES IN DONGGUAN CITY

China serves as the largest hub for footwear manufacturing and sales globally, boasting a comprehensive industry supply chain. The overall market size of China's footwear sector exhibited a steady growth trajectory from 2013 to 2022. However, the year 2020 witnessed a significant disruption due to the adverse effects of the pandemic on global production, transportation, and

services. This led to a sharp decline in export orders, prompting footwear enterprises to halt production or face closure due to dwindling demand. In 2020, Dongguan City experienced a 37.5% decrease in footwear production, generating 120 million pairs. Furthermore, the export value of shoes and boots plummeted by 41.7% to 8.66 billion yuan in the same year. The challenges faced by footwear export firms included recruitment difficulties, escalating labor costs, and volatile commodity prices, exacerbated by the increasingly complex and uncertain external environment. Additionally, many countries shifted their labor-intensive industries to Southeast Asian nations with lower labor costs, eroding China's demographic advantage in cheap labor. Nevertheless, the rise of cross-border e-commerce further strained the Chinese footwear industry, leading to reduced operational profits in the low-end market due to fierce price competition. On the other hand, European and American markets held a competitive edge in product innovation and value addition in the high-end segment. The epidemic's impact reverberated across the entire footwear industry chain, affecting production, warehousing, exports, and sales. Dongguan, Guangdong Province emerged as a key player in the global footwear trade, hosting over 1,000 traders and controlling over 70% of trade orders. Despite the industry's advanced systems for design, R&D, production, and logistics, challenges such as fragmented industrial chains, information stagnation, low profitability, and operational inefficiencies persisted. In the aftermath of the financial crisis, businesses sought leadership guidance to navigate through difficulties, with cross-border e-commerce offering a promising avenue for foreign trade development.

4. ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF CROSS-BORDER E-COMMERCE ON DONGGUAN FOOTWEAR EXPORT ENTERPRISES

In China, cross-border e-commerce plays a significant role in various aspects of society. To enhance the business performance of Dongguan shoe export enterprises, boost foreign trade development in the Dongguan footwear industry, and improve the core competitiveness of the Dongguan shoe industry in the global market, the cross-border e-commerce business in the shoe industry has primarily focused on expanding trade partners, reducing transaction costs, increasing enterprise competitiveness, streamlining trade processes, and so forth. However, while advancing cross-border e-commerce, challenges such as a lack of core competitiveness, shortage of skilled professionals, and heightened external risks also arise.

4.1 Analysis of the Cross-border E-commerce Promoting the Development of Footwear Export Enterprises in Dongguan City

Cross-border e-commerce facilitates the growth of Dongguan footwear exporters through the expansion of trading partners, lowering transaction expenses, increasing firm competitiveness, and streamlining trade procedures.

4.1.1 Expanding Trade Objects

The expansion of traditional footwear export businesses heavily relies on orders from established international clients, with products mainly distributed through B2B trading platforms. This results in a restricted trade channel and customer base for these businesses. The rise of cross-border e-commerce, facilitated by advancements in Internet technology, has created new sales channels and opportunities for entering foreign markets. This transition has not only widened the consumer base for overseas customers but also enabled export enterprises to diversify their trading

targets. According to data from the Customs Department, Dongguan's foreign trade activities are mainly concentrated in Asia, North America, Europe, and countries along the Belt and Road initiative. However, in recent years, there has been a surge in international emerging markets, particularly in the field of cross-border e-commerce, which has attracted the attention of many export enterprises. For example, Africa, with its sizable population and relatively relaxed quality standards for footwear, presents a promising market opportunity. Moreover, the rapid growth of e-commerce in Africa, with 460 million Internet users across 15 countries, provides a vast and untapped market for export enterprises. Africa has a total of approximately 523 million Internet users, making the online shopping sector more extensive and the market significantly vast. The growth potential in this area is enormous. In conclusion, the global market offers substantial growth opportunities for Chinese export enterprises venturing into cross-border e-commerce, thereby enhancing their profitability.

4.1.2 Improving Product Quality

Traditional shoe-making enterprises in Dongguan primarily engage in OEM processing and specialize in leather footwear products. However, these enterprises are predominantly small and medium-sized, producing mainly low-end and medium-end products. To shift away from the production of low-end goods and promote sustainable economic growth, Dongguan's footwear export enterprises have progressively transitioned to capital-intensive and technology-intensive industries. The advancement of cross-border e-commerce has facilitated this transformation by leveraging high-tech solutions, Internet technology, big data, and precise consumer targeting. By placing consumers at the core of their operations, enterprises are able to enhance their product brand power through various stages such as design, manufacturing, order processing, marketing, sales, customer service, and after-sales support.

Furthermore, according to academic research, foreign leather markets in cross-border e-commerce place a strong emphasis on product quality and environmental standards, which differ from domestic requirements. Specifically, higher standards are required for harmful substances such as formaldehyde and hexavalent chromium. To meet these standards and overcome green trade barriers, shoe export enterprises in Dongguan are continuously improving their leather manufacturing technology. This focus on quality and environmental protection has led to a transformation in the shoe industry, shifting from a focus on quantity to a focus on quality, branding, and environmental sustainability. Overall, cross-border e-commerce encourages enterprises to innovate independently, enhance their core competitiveness, develop the green leather industry, build strong enterprise brands, and accelerate the internationalization of Chinese brands.

4.1.3 Reducing the Transaction Costs

The development of e-commerce mainly reduces the cost of sales by reducing multiple intermediate parts. The development of cross-border e-commerce is mainly from the pre-transaction, mid-transaction, and post-transaction to reduce the cost of export trade of Dongguan footwear exporters. Specifically divided into pre-transaction publicity costs, search costs, and information costs; mid-transaction negotiation costs, warehousing costs, and payment costs, and post-transaction logistics costs, payment costs, and risk costs.

The reduction of publicity costs and information costs is mainly through the collection of big data on the Internet and cross-border e-commerce platforms, market research to analyze consumer demand and market trends, to formulate accurate product marketing strategies to maximize the publicity and marketing effect. Search costs are mainly the costs incurred in finding suppliers and

co-operators. The development of cross-border e-commerce allows enterprises to find suppliers and co-operators that meet their requirements without making overseas field visits.

Negotiation and communication costs are mainly through the development of a cross-border e-commerce platform to break the time and space limitations, and to achieve the information sharing and exchange between buyers and sellers. The reduction of transaction costs is mainly reflected in the trend of electronic paper contracts. Cross-border e-commerce has achieved a great improvement in the efficiency of supply chain turnover and reduced the cost of warehousing through the integrated system of intelligent warehousing and distribution. At the same time, the development of e-commerce also reduces the delivery costs incurred by the seller to the buyer in fulfilling the sale contract it has signed.

The reduction of logistics costs is mainly through the integrated development of intelligent warehousing and logistics and distribution, which improves the turnover efficiency of the supply chain, shortening it from the original 14 days to 7 days. The logistics cost of a single order can be reduced from about 15 yuan to 3 yuan to 5 yuan.

4.1.4 Streamlining the Trade Process

Traditional manufacturing enterprises in Dongguan are predominantly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that are dispersed in their development stage and have yet to achieve large-scale collectivization.

With the establishment of cross-border e-commerce industrial parks, Dongguan has transformed the dispersed nature of cross-border e-commerce enterprises into a more coordinated and clustered state. These industrial parks bring together various aspects of the cross-border e-commerce process, such as sourcing goods, utilizing platforms, storing warehousing, managing logistics, and leveraging information technology to enhance operational efficiency. This integration has led to the formation of a closed and unified cross-border e-commerce industry chain. Additionally, the Dongguan Comprehensive Pilot Zone benefits from its ability to integrate different departments, enabling seamless information exchange and mutual supervision recognition between departments and enterprises. A comprehensive service platform has been established to consolidate customs clearance, taxation, foreign exchange, industry and commerce, credit, logistics, and other services. The promotion of a public service platform for cross-border e-commerce and international trade 'single window' aims to streamline functions and technology, facilitating trade processes such as customs clearance integration. Overall, Dongguan's intelligent supply chain system for cross-border e-commerce integrates advantageous resources from all parties involved in the supply chain, promoting comprehensive cooperation among supply, transaction, collection, logistics, and settlement aspects. This deep cooperation enhances efficiency, streamlines management, eliminates intermediate steps and reduces overall costs. These measures have simplified the trade process for Dongguan footwear exporters.

4.2 Problems Existing in the Development of Cross-border E-commerce in Dongguan Footwear Export Enterprises

Although Dongguan's foreign trade shows a thriving trend, there are still problems, such as low brand awareness, the unreasonable structure of cross-border e-commerce merchants in the enterprise transformation process, and an imperfect after-sales system.

4.2.1 Competitiveness Issues

The original equipment manufacturer (OEM) specializing in low-end products dominates the Chinese footwear industry but faces challenges of limited innovation and research and development (R&D) capabilities. As a result, some shoe companies produce substandard and trendy products, leading to product homogenization and low value-added offerings. In the context of cross-border e-commerce development, traditional manufacturing industries tend to engage in cutthroat competition through price wars, resulting in slim profit margins for businesses. In Dongguan, the traditional footwear production sector suffers from low product quality and a lack of distinctiveness, compounded by enterprises' persistent focus on price competition rather than building independent brands. Consequently, the core competitiveness of Dongguan's footwear export brands remains weak.

4.2.2 Talents Shortage Issues

In recent years, the rapid growth of cross-border e-commerce has resulted in a shift in the talent requirements of enterprises. In the current landscape, there is a demand for digital experts and professionals with a diverse skill set in cross-border e-commerce. Specifically, individuals in this field are expected to possess computer proficiency, international marketing knowledge, and strong communication abilities in multiple languages. Additionally, a comprehensive understanding of international trade regulations, the legal frameworks of different countries, as well as the customs and etiquette of various cultures is essential. "According to research data from the Ali Research Institute, over 30% of Chinese enterprises are seeking talents in e-commerce operations and marketing, while more than 20% are in need of cross-border e-commerce technology experts. Furthermore, over 10% of businesses are looking for individuals skilled in logistics and supply chain management for cross-border operations[18]." According to the main indicators of the national e-commerce development plan, the number of e-commerce-related employees in 2020 is 60.15 million, and it is expected to reach 70 million in 2025, with a gap of 9.85 million e-commerce talents in five years. According to the survey and analysis of relevant institutions, as of 2021, the national cross-border e-commerce talent gap reached about 6 million.

Meanwhile, in the realm of cross-border e-commerce talent development, the existing training programs for cross-border e-commerce professionals in higher education institutions are not aligned with the demands of the industry. These institutions place a greater emphasis on imparting theoretical knowledge of cross-border e-commerce to students while neglecting the development of practical skills. As a result, graduates lack the necessary expertise to effectively establish and manage cross-border e-commerce enterprises.

Furthermore, the majority of cross-border e-commerce enterprises operated by footwear exporters in Dongguan are small and medium-sized enterprises. As a result, these enterprises face limitations in terms of company size, capital, and development potential. Consequently, the ability to attract high-level talent is diminished.

4.2.3 External Risk Problems

There are several external risks that footwear exporters face when expanding their export trade operations in developing markets.

Firstly, the long and unpredictable transport routes, along with unforeseen circumstances, contribute to high logistics costs and extended delivery cycles, resulting in a lag in the development of cross-border logistics. The volatile foreign market environment further exacerbates challenges, including transaction risks stemming from foreign political factors, payment delays, disruptions in

delivery due to conflict, and foreign anti-dumping measures on China's labor-intensive products like footwear. These trade barriers hinder smooth cross-border trade operations. Secondly, the inconvenience in returning cross-border e-commerce products is primarily attributed to issues such as export tax rebate processes, customs clearance procedures at border checkpoints, and prolonged transport times. The challenges of managing returned goods, whether through secondary resale, on-site disposal, or repatriation for domestic sales, present additional complexities for businesses and result in profit losses.

5. COUNTERMEASURES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CROSS-BORDER E-COMMERCE IN DONGGUAN FOOTWEAR EXPORT ENTERPRISES

5.1 Strengthening Brand Building

Encouraging footwear export companies to establish and cultivate their brands is crucial for enhancing their competitiveness in foreign markets. A key challenge faced by the Dongguan manufacturing industry in its transition to cross-border e-commerce enterprises is the lack of brand recognition, making them less competitive in the global export market. To increase the global competitiveness of foreign trade companies and promote the growth of local brands internationally, it is essential to have a deep understanding of the cultural background and consumer behavior of target markets. This requires conducting personalized market research and strategic analysis for each target group. By offering a variety of personalized designs that incorporate both Chinese elements and international styles, while also cracking down on counterfeit products, the homogeneity of exported footwear products can be reduced. Improving international marketing strategies and focusing on aspects such as uniqueness, sophistication, and quality can help meet the diverse preferences of target consumer groups and enhance the brand strength of cross-border e-commerce products in the footwear industry. The development and rise of local brands such as Dibao and CHCH.

5.2 Nurturing E-commerce Talents

In response to the demands of the current social market, our focus will be on nurturing skilled professionals who possess a diverse range of abilities. This will entail a collaboration between enterprises and educational institutions to develop individuals proficient in cross-border e-commerce practices. Emphasis will also be placed on enhancing partnerships between schools and businesses to establish a collaborative training approach, as well as actively seeking out high-quality external talents to create a well-rounded e-commerce talent pool. Colleges and universities will leverage existing training programs for majors such as international trade, business English, and e-commerce to educate students. Practical experiences, such as visits to foreign trade enterprises, participation in cross-border e-commerce activities, and internships, will be incorporated to enhance students' professional knowledge and skills. To support the growth of cross-border e-commerce, we will equip interdisciplinary professionals with expertise in international logistics and trade, familiarity with commonly used international payment methods, a comprehensive understanding of relevant policies and laws, strong oral English skills, a deep understanding of marketing principles, and exceptional research capabilities. Through the interpretation of Dongguan's cross-border e-commerce development plan, the Dongguan Municipal Government plans to achieve more than 500,000 employees in the cross-border e-commerce industry and train more than 50,000 cross-border e-commerce talents by 2025.

5.3 Warehousing and Logistics

Promoting the establishment of overseas or border warehouses, and enhancing operational efficiency and service quality through meticulous management, data analysis, intelligent warehouse management, logistics optimization, and other strategies is essential to meet the rising demands of consumers for a superior shopping experience. This initiative will enhance the infrastructure development for cross-border e-commerce and reinforce the establishment of supporting facilities such as logistics and distribution. The presence of overseas warehouses will lead to a reduction in delivery errors and product damages for sellers, cost savings in logistics, shorter transaction times, and increased speed of commodity circulation. Furthermore, it will offer overseas customers a competitive after-sales system and effectively address the challenges of after-sales service in cross-border e-commerce. The construction of overseas warehouses in Dongguan City, from 30 overseas warehouses to the current 36 overseas warehouses, the cumulative number of service enterprises has also increased from the original 2,000 to the current 29,000. The construction of overseas warehouses greatly facilitates the development of cross-border e-commerce of export enterprises and greatly solves the problems of cross-border logistics time. Through the interpretation of Dongguan's cross-border e-commerce development plan, the Dongguan Municipal Government hopes to achieve the construction of more than 50 cross-border e-commerce overseas warehouses in 2025.

5.4 Optimizing the E-commerce Platform and Strengthening the Supervision

Efforts should be made to advance technological advancements in the footwear industry and improve data creation processes by utilizing advanced technologies such as cloud computing, big data, blockchain, and AI. Additionally, it is important to provide a well-organized and user-friendly platform for international footwear and clothing trade firms in China to engage in cross-border e-commerce activities. Improving information norms and credit development in e-commerce is crucial for enhancing the efficiency and security of online transactions. Governments should strengthen legal and regulatory frameworks for international e-commerce, establish relevant norms, and create a favorable market environment. Furthermore, governments should enhance organizational structures and systems to improve governmental services. Oversight of international e-commerce should be increased, with the establishment of a dedicated supervisory division and consistent supervisory norms. China should play a greater role in international governance and rule-making, and work towards signing both multilateral and bilateral trade and investment agreements with countries along the Belt and Road and other economic systems.

6. CONCLUSION

The emergence of cross-border e-commerce has significantly boosted international trade in China, particularly benefiting Dongguan footwear export businesses. These businesses have experienced advantages such as expanded consumer markets, reduced transaction costs, enhanced product competitiveness, and simplified trading processes. However, challenges like market competition, labor shortages, and external risks also exist. To overcome these challenges, Dongguan footwear export enterprises should focus on strengthening their brand, expanding internationally, providing professional training for cross-border e-commerce, improving logistics systems, and optimizing e-commerce platforms for better supervision. By implementing these strategies, Dongguan export enterprises can effectively navigate the evolving landscape of cross-border e-commerce and achieve sustainable growth in their export business.

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