

The Study on The Development Trends of Cross-Border E-Commerce Platforms

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Abstract. With the continuous deepening of globalization and digitalization, cross-border e-commerce (CBEC) has become a critical driving force in promoting international trade and global market development. CBEC not only reshapes traditional trade models but also provides unprecedented internationalization opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), significantly enriching consumer choices and fostering the prosperity and diversification of the global market. Despite the rapid development of e-commerce, there remain numerous challenges in various areas that require further in-depth research and exploration. For instance, how technology can continuously drive the development of CBEC, how consumer behavior adapts to this emerging model, how trade processes can be optimized to accommodate digital transformation, and how CBEC can promote sustainable development and brand internationalization. The answers to these questions are crucial for a comprehensive understanding of CBEC and are the focus of both academic and industry attention. This paper aims to review and analyze the development trends of CBEC, delving into six aspects: technological drivers, consumer behavior, trade process reconstruction, challenges faced, sustainable development, and brand internationalization. The goal is to provide valuable insights and experiences for the further development of cross-border e-commerce.

Keywords: Cross-border E-commerce, Technology Driven, Development Trends.

1. Introduction

In the wave of globalization and digitalization, cross-border e-commerce (CBEC) has rapidly risen to become a key driving force in global economic development. CBEC not only reshapes traditional trade models but also offers unprecedented internationalization opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), enriching consumer choices and fostering the prosperity and diversification of the global market. CBEC has profoundly impacted the global trade landscape by eliminating geographical barriers, accelerating the speed of transactions, reducing transaction costs, and enabling the flow of goods and services across borders. It also promotes economic and cultural exchanges between different countries and regions, advancing the process of global economic integration.

With the impetus of technological innovation and global trade policies, the rapid development of CBEC has brought about new business models and market opportunities. However, this field also faces numerous challenges, such as logistical obstacles, language differences, and information security concerns. These issues not only affect the efficiency and security of CBEC but also impose higher demands on consumer experience and business operations. Therefore, in-depth research on the development trends and challenges of CBEC holds significant theoretical and practical importance. This paper aims to review and analyze the development trends of CBEC from several perspectives: how technology continuously drives CBEC's development, how consumer behavior adapts to this emerging model, how CBEC facilitates brand internationalization, and how trade processes can be optimized to accommodate digital transformation. The goal is to provide valuable insights and experiences for the high-quality development of cross-border e-commerce.

2. Technology-Driven on Cross-Border E-commerce

2.1. The Impact of Technological Development on Cross-Border E-commerce

In the globalized business environment, technological advancements have become a key driving force behind the development of cross-border e-commerce. Innovations in technology play a crucial role in promoting high-quality growth in this sector. The integration of blockchain technology and the Internet of Things (IoT) provides new opportunities for cross-border e-commerce. Zhang et al. (2020) [1] point out that the coupling of blockchain technology, the digital economy, and digital trade can significantly drive the growth of import cross-border e-commerce. Research by Du and Yu (2021) [2] found that utilizing IoT for information gathering, combined with blockchain for information storage and processing, enables commodity trade through cross-border e-commerce, ensuring information security and facilitating the synergistic development of internet technologies and cross-border e-commerce.

The internet serves as the cornerstone of cross-border e-commerce, and its role cannot be overlooked. Zhang et al. (2020) [3] demonstrate that the internet significantly promotes international trade by lowering transaction costs, enhancing efficiency, and alleviating information asymmetry. Lendle et al. (2016) [4], through an analysis of international trade data based on eBay from 61 countries, found that the reduction in information search costs diminished the impact of geographical distance on international trade by 65%. Furthermore, the studies by Freund and Weinhold (2002) [5] and Bianchi and Mathews (2013) [6] reveal the positive effects of the internet on service exports and foreign trade enterprises, emphasizing the role of internet marketing activities in increasing information sources, developing foreign business connections, and promoting commodity exports. Empirical research by Swan et al. (2021) [7] further confirms the positive impact of the internet on international trade.

The widespread access to broadband internet has also provided momentum for the development of cross-border e-commerce. Visser (2019) [8], based on panel data from 162 exporting countries and 175 destinations between 1998 and 2014, found that broadband access significantly enhances both the extensive and intensive margins of international trade. The increased internet penetration rate, particularly for differentiated products in export and import markets, has a notable positive impact. It is worth noting that the promoting effect of broadband access on the extensive margin of international trade is primarily observed between high-income and low-income countries, rather than between countries with similar income levels.

The impact of technological development on cross-border e-commerce is multifaceted, encompassing various aspects such as blockchain, IoT, internet infrastructure, and broadband access. These technological advancements not only improve transaction efficiency and reduce costs but also expand market reach, providing unprecedented opportunities for participants in cross-border e-commerce.

2.2. Cross-Border E-commerce Platforms and the Consumer Behavior

With the continuous development of cross-border e-commerce platforms, they play an increasingly important role in shaping consumer behavior. Personalization of products and pricing strategies are key factors for the success of e-commerce. Brooks et al. (2002) [9] analyzed how e-commerce products leverage information technology to cater to consumer preferences, providing personalized products and differentiated pricing strategies for various consumers. Lee et al. (2006) [10], in the context of monopolistic e-commerce firms, explored how to attract consumers with free low-end information service products while generating revenue through premium paid information service products. They also examined how firms can formulate optimal pricing strategies and make decisions about launching new products in the face of diversified consumer preferences and market competition (Nocco et al., 2014) [11].

Logistics experience and consumer trust represent another critical aspect of cross-border e-commerce. Cross-border goods often require lengthy logistics processes, and uncertainties such as

safety issues and time delays during transit can significantly impact consumer utility (Banerjee and Banerjee, 2012) [12]. To address this, risk mitigation and purchase intention have become focal areas for cross-border e-commerce platforms. The research by Crespo & del Bosque (2010) [13] indicates that cross-border e-commerce platforms can substantially alleviate consumers' concerns regarding product risk and purchase risk, thereby enhancing their willingness to buy. Additionally, information transparency is an essential means of building consumer trust. Xu et al. (2021) [14] argue that live streaming can provide information transparency to consumers, and the visibility of live-streaming video functions can modulate the relationship between information transparency and consumer purchase intention.

In essence, cross-border e-commerce platforms exert a multifaceted influence on consumer behavior. From offering personalized products and devising pricing strategies to optimizing logistics experiences, and from reducing perceptions of risk to enhancing information transparency via emerging media, these platforms are driving the evolution of consumer behavior and fostering their own growth.

3. Reconstructing the Trade Processes

3.1. The Role of Cross-Border E-commerce in Restructuring Trade Processes

Cross-border e-commerce (CBEC), as an emerging business operation model, is profoundly changing the processes of international trade. Fingar (2000) [15] and Ma et al. (2018) [16] indicate that CBEC positively promotes the development of international trade by deepening international division of labor, updating trade methods, altering the cost structure of international trade, restructuring global trading conditions, and influencing international trade policies. These changes include a disruption of traditional transaction models, where Garicano and Kaplan (2001) [17] emphasize that CBEC significantly shortens the distance between buyers and sellers by compressing intermediaries, thereby improving transaction efficiency and reducing costs. Moreover, cross-border e-commerce greatly simplifies the transaction process. Yang (2024) [18] notes that through online payment and electronic contracts, CBEC makes transactions faster and more convenient. This convenience not only accelerates transaction speed but also enhances the efficiency of cross-border trade and the user experience.

Terzi (2011) [18] further notes that CBEC facilitates online transactions between buyers and sellers, effectively reducing operational costs for sellers. This is particularly beneficial for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as it enables them to enter the global market at reduced costs and compete with larger entities. By eliminating intermediaries, reducing transaction costs, and enhancing transaction efficiency, CBEC is reshaping international trade processes, injecting new momentum and defining new directions for global trade development. Positioning cross-border e-commerce as a pivotal force for innovation and growth in global trade.

3.2. Optimization of Trade Processes by Cross-Border E-commerce Platforms

Cross-border e-commerce platforms play a significant role in streamlining and improving trade processes. By aggregating numerous merchants and products onto a single platform, these platforms not only offer buyers an extensive array of differentiated products but also enhance search efficiency by continuously refining their search algorithms, thereby significantly reducing the time, effort, and financial costs associated with buyer searches (Sun et al., 2017) [19]. Furthermore, the optimization of transaction processes and the expansion of sales channels substantially reduce transaction costs for businesses, which in turn lowers the overall costs associated with international trade (Taherdoost et al., 2021) [20].

Furthermore, cross-border e-commerce further optimizes trade processes by lowering what are known as menu costs. Brynjolfsson and Smith (2000) [21] note that the speed of online retail price adjustments is much slower than that of traditional retailers, reflecting that internet sales channels have lower menu costs compared to traditional sales channels. This reduction in costs means that

merchants can adjust their pricing strategies more flexibly and respond quickly to market changes without incurring high adjustment costs. These optimization measures not only enhance trade efficiency but also increase the attractiveness of cross-border e-commerce platforms, making them an indispensable part of global trade. With ongoing technological advancements and the continuous improvement of platform functionalities, cross-border e-commerce platforms will further drive the optimization and innovation of trade processes in the future.

3.3. Challenges of Cross-Border E-commerce and Adjustments in Trade Processes

Cross-border e-commerce (CBEC) is emerging as a new engine for global trade, gradually transforming traditional trade models, but this transformation is accompanied by challenges. Logistics costs are a significant concern, with Gessner and Snodgrass (2015) [22] emphasizing that logistical barriers remain a major bottleneck for CBEC development, even as CBEC seeks to reduce costs by minimizing intermediaries. Effective logistics solutions are crucial for ensuring that products reach consumers smoothly and promptly.

In addition to logistics issues, Gomez-Herrera et al. (2014) [23] reveal through an analysis of trade data from 27 EU countries that language differences present a new source of cost. This implies that cross-border e-commerce enterprises must overcome language barriers by providing multilingual services and enhancing cross-cultural communication capabilities. Saptia et al. (2021) [24] also point out that differing return policies and language differences between countries may pose obstacles for consumers, further underscoring the importance of providing a seamless shopping experience.

Despite these challenges, the development of CBEC has a positive impact on promoting trade growth between countries. Chang (2019) [25] indicates that CBEC helps strengthen economic ties among countries along the Belt and Road Initiative, weakening trade barriers related to geography, politics, and culture. The studies by Cairncross (2001) [26] and Cowgill & Dorobantu (2017) [27] further confirm the role of CBEC in reducing trade costs, particularly by providing more opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to enter international markets.

Gomez-Herrera et al. (2014) [28] also note that B2C cross-border e-commerce reduces costs associated with geographical distance, benefiting consumers and improving market accessibility. Overall, CBEC plays a crucial role in restructuring trade processes. Through innovative solutions and ongoing adjustments to trade processes, CBEC is expected to further promote the development of international trade, leading to a more efficient and inclusive global market.

4. Reconstructing Trade Processes

4.1. Cross-Border E-commerce and Consumer Welfare

The development of cross-border e-commerce has significantly enriched consumer choices and opened new avenues for enhancing consumer welfare. Research by Fan et al. (2018) [29] indicates that cost savings on retail e-commerce platforms greatly improve consumer welfare, particularly in remote areas, where the benefits are even more pronounced. Similarly, Hoque et al. (2020) [30] highlight that cross-border e-commerce provides consumers with a more convenient and streamlined shopping platform, allowing them to purchase products from around the world without leaving home. This demonstrates that through e-commerce platforms, consumers can access a broader range of goods and services at lower costs.

KaWa (2016) [31] further emphasizes that import cross-border e-commerce enhances logistics efficiency and reduces costs, which helps small and micro enterprises improve their service capabilities and market competitiveness. This increase in efficiency directly benefits consumers by providing them with more high-quality, cost-effective options. Numerous studies have examined the impact of cross-border e-commerce on consumer welfare from perspectives such as price, transaction costs, and product diversity. For instance, a survey on cross-border e-commerce in the EU found that the vast selection available online, more affordable prices, and lower search costs resulted in consumer savings of up to €12 billion (Consulting Civic, 2011) [32]. Estimates by Lendle et al. (2012)

[33] also show that if offline trade costs were reduced to the level of online trade, consumer welfare could increase by an average of 29%.

However, consumers may face higher risks when shopping at online stores, such as concerns about transaction security and logistics safety, which could diminish consumer welfare (Martens, 2013) [34]. Therefore, to maximize consumer welfare, e-commerce platforms must continuously enhance security measures for transactions and logistics. E-commerce also brings additional convenience by reducing time and information costs. Compared to traditional shopping, consumers can more easily compare different products online and quickly obtain necessary information without expending significant time and effort moving between physical stores (Brynjolfsson et al., 2003) [35].

In summary, cross-border e-commerce has a profound impact on enhancing consumer welfare by offering a broader range of product options, reducing transaction and search costs, and increasing shopping convenience. As technology advances and platform services continue to be refined, we can expect cross-border e-commerce to unlock even greater value for consumers. This includes more personalized shopping experiences, faster and more reliable delivery options, and innovative services that cater to the evolving needs of a global consumer base.

4.2. Cross-Border E-commerce and Sustainable Development of Supply Chains

Cross-border e-commerce platforms are driving the digital transformation of agricultural product supply chains by leveraging technologies such as big data, blockchain, and cloud computing as core engines. These platforms integrate information flows, facilitate effective collaboration among stakeholders, enhance management transparency, and improve coordination efficiency, thereby supporting the sustainable development of supply chains (Yang et al., 2023) [36]. In terms of environmental sustainability, supply chains led by cross-border e-commerce emphasize the efficient use of resources and clean production, promoting practices of the circular economy (Luthra et al., 2016) [37]. By utilizing eco-friendly packaging materials and renewable energy, these platforms aim to reduce environmental pollution and carbon emissions while integrating environmental management systems and green assessments to enhance sustainability benefits (Liu et al., 2012) [38]. Multilateral collaboration is crucial in cross-border agricultural product supply chains. By establishing strategic partnerships and integrating resources, these platforms achieve risk-sharing and benefit-sharing, thereby improving the efficiency and sustainability of the supply chain (Rauer & Kaufmann, 2015[39]; Maloni & Brown, 2006) [40]. Business and technological innovations, combined with social responsibility, contribute to the creation of a stable and beneficial ecosystem for cross-border agricultural product supply chains.

5. Cross-Border E-commerce and the Promotion of Brand Internationalization

5.1. Corporate Brand Restructuring and Business Internationalization

Zaheer and Manrakhan (2001) [41] noted that e-commerce provides new opportunities for corporate internationalization, facilitating brands in easily crossing traditional boundaries. This is reflected in the business models of cross-border e-commerce. At the same time, Hånell et al. (2019) [42] emphasized the critical role of e-commerce in the internationalization process, as it reduces barriers posed by resource constraints and paves the way for brands to enter global markets. Through e-commerce platforms, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can achieve global distribution of their products and services at lower costs and with streamlined processes.

In conclusion, the advent of e-commerce has not only transformed the distribution strategies of enterprises but has also opened up new avenues for SMEs to internationalise, thereby enabling them to compete and grow in the global marketplace. This trend is anticipated to gain further momentum as technology continues to advance and e-commerce platforms become increasingly optimised, thereby creating further opportunities for enterprises in the global marketplace.

The rise of internet platforms is reshaping brand distribution strategies. Forsgren and Hagström (2007) [43] observed that companies increasingly adopt the internet as their sole distribution channel, optimizing distribution processes and significantly expanding their geographic reach.

5.2. The Role of E-commerce in the Internationalization of the Fashion Industry and Brand Efficiency

The fashion industry has become a prominent highlight in the internationalization strategies of e-commerce. Guercini et al. (2020) [44] found that both fast fashion and luxury brands have leveraged e-commerce as a powerful tool for overseas expansion. Guercini and Runfola (2015) [45] further pointed out that cross-border e-commerce provides global fashion brands with opportunities to explore new sources of profit. E-commerce not only alters brands' market entry strategies but also enhances brand creation efficiency and overall market performance. Eduardsen (2018) [46] indicated that e-commerce can accelerate brand awareness establishment in overseas markets. Additionally, the work of Jin and Cedrola (2016) [47] and Ashworth et al. (2006) [48] demonstrates that e-commerce helps brands achieve higher profits in international markets while expanding their customer base and brand influence.

6. Conclusions and Future Outlook

This article analyzes the development trends and current challenges of cross-border e-commerce (CBEC) by examining four aspects: technology drivers, consumer behavior, trade process reconstruction, and brand internationalization. It provides theoretical support and practical guidance for participants in CBEC, offering insights for the sustainable development of cross-border e-commerce platforms. Future research can focus on the following five areas:

1. With the advancement of technologies such as blockchain, artificial intelligence, and big data, how these technologies can be more deeply integrated into CBEC platforms to enhance transaction security, transparency, and efficiency. Empirical studies could focus on supply chain management, payment systems, and risk control.

2. Existing policies and regulations may not fully accommodate new business models. Future research should explore how to provide a flexible legal environment for CBEC while protecting consumer rights and promoting fair competition, including aspects like data protection, tax policy, and intellectual property.

3. Consumer behavior varies significantly across different cultural contexts. Further research should investigate how cross-cultural factors influence consumer purchasing decisions, brand loyalty, and satisfaction, as well as how CBEC platforms can meet the needs of consumers in different markets through localization strategies.

4. Logistics is a critical component of CBEC and poses significant challenges. Future studies should examine how to reduce logistics costs, shorten delivery times, and improve the accuracy and transparency of goods tracking through technological innovations and process optimization.

5. Brand internationalization is an important aspect of CBEC development. An in-depth analysis of strategic choices for brand internationalization in different market environments is needed, as well as how these strategies impact brand awareness, market performance, and long-term competitiveness.

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