Research on the Development Path of Rural E-commerce in Guang'an City Under the Background of Common Prosperity

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Abstract: Common prosperity is the essential requirement of socialism and an important feature of Chinese-style modernization. In the new stage of steadily promoting common prosperity for all people, integrating e-commerce with rural areas is a key measure to achieve common prosperity for farmers and rural areas. Through in-depth exploration of the relationship between rural e-commerce and common prosperity, combined with the current situation of rural e-commerce development in Guang'an City, this paper comprehensively analyzes the constraints of rural e-commerce development in Guang'an City, and puts forward the corresponding optimization path.

Keywords: Common prosperity, Rural e-commerce, Rural modernization.

1. Introduction

According to the report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), more tangible progress will be made in achieving common prosperity for all by 2035 [1]. As China continues to build a modern socialist country in an all-round way, common prosperity has become an important strategic goal. Promoting common prosperity for farmers and rural areas is the difficulty and focus of achieving common prosperity for all. In this context, rural e-commerce, as an emerging business model, has great potential and provides a new way to achieve common prosperity.

Guang’an City, an important city in southwest China, is rooted in rich agricultural resources and rural culture. In recent years, with the rapid development of information technology and the rise of e-commerce, Guang’an city has actively responded to national policies, incorporated rural e-commerce development into the overall strategic layout of rural revitalization, and explored a road of rural e-commerce development in line with the local actual situation. Rural e-commerce provides a more convenient sales channel for rural residents in Guang’an City, and supports more agricultural products and local characteristic products to go out of the countryside and enter the national market, so as to comprehensively promote rural revitalization, accelerate agricultural industrialization, revitalize rural assets, increase farmers' property income, and make more rural residents get rich through hard work. We should strengthen the construction of rural infrastructure and public service system, promote the construction of rural living environment, and promote the comprehensive upgrading of agriculture, comprehensive progress of rural areas and comprehensive development of farmers to achieve common prosperity by comprehensively promoting the revitalization of rural industries, talents, culture, ecology and organizations.

2. The Relationship Between Rural E-commerce and Common Prosperity

The connotation of common prosperity includes multiple dimensions such as economy, society, environment and culture, and the development of rural e-commerce is closely related to the goal of common prosperity. Rural e-commerce can increase farmers' income, improve the quality of life of rural residents, promote the development of rural environmental protection industry, promote the inheritance and innovation of rural culture, and provide a new driving force and carrier for the realization of common prosperity.

2.1. Economic dimension

Common prosperity not only means the universality of economic development, but also requires the narrowing of the development gap between rural and urban areas. As an innovative business model, rural e-commerce can not only promote rural economic growth, but also promote the development coordination between rural areas and urban areas. Rural e-commerce can break geographical restrictions. Farmers are no longer limited to traditional sales channels. They can sell products directly to consumers, get rid of intermediate links, reduce sales costs, and improve farmers' income level. At the same time, technology, capital, management and other resources can be introduced through e-commerce platforms to promote the optimization and upgrading of rural industrial structure and create new employment opportunities for rural areas. Farmers can become suppliers of agricultural products, logistics delivery workers, sales agents and other roles through e-commerce platforms, providing various services.

2.2. Social dimension

Common prosperity The pursuit of social security and the popularization of public services is an important aspect of promoting social equity and equality. With the popularization of e-commerce, rural residents have a richer choice of goods and services, which can not only meet the diversified consumption needs of rural residents, but also provide a more convenient way of shopping and improve the quality of life of rural residents. Through e-commerce platforms, rural residents can enjoy online education, medical care and other social security services, improve the level of social security for rural residents, and make up for the gap between urban and rural education, medical resources imbalance. In addition, the development of rural e-commerce can also promote the social
participation and integration of rural residents. E-commerce platforms provide social opportunities for rural residents, reduce urban-rural information barriers, promote the interaction between rural residents and urban residents, promote social integration and common development, promote social equity, and promote social harmony.

2.3. Environmental dimension

Common prosperity requires the coordination of economic development and environmental protection. Traditional offline shopping usually brings a lot of transportation and logistics activities, consumes a lot of energy, and also produces a lot of pollution. Rural e-commerce, on the other hand, delivers products directly to consumers through online platforms, reducing the transportation of intermediate links, and reducing energy consumption and environmental pollution [3]. At the same time, as consumers’ demand for green products and sustainable lifestyles increases, rural e-commerce plays a special role in promoting sustainable agricultural development and promoting ecological protection in rural areas. Through e-commerce platforms, environmental protection products and ecological agricultural products are rapidly introduced to the market, increasing the market share of these products and encouraging farmers to adopt more environmentally friendly agricultural production methods.

2.4. Cultural dimension

Common prosperity pursues cultural inheritance and innovation. Rural e-commerce provides rural residents with the opportunity to promote and sell local specialty products [4]. Many rural areas have unique handicrafts, local products and traditional agricultural products. Through e-commerce platforms, farmers can bring these local specialty products to the market, so that more people can understand and appreciate the cultural characteristics of rural areas. This will help protect and inherit the intangible cultural heritage of rural areas and promote the dissemination and promotion of rural culture. Meanwhile, rural residents can also access urban goods and cultural products through e-commerce platforms. Enrich their lifestyles and cultural experience lifestyles, and broaden their cultural horizons. In addition, rural e-commerce also encourages rural residents to participate in innovation and entrepreneurship, and promotes the cultivation and development of innovation and entrepreneurship culture in rural areas [5].

3. Current Situation of Rural E-commerce Development in Guang’an

3.1. The scale of transactions continues to expand

According to the statistics of Guang’an Municipal Bureau of Commerce, from January to June 2021, the online transaction volume of Guang’an reached 3.615 billion yuan, with a year-on-year growth of 26.03%, ranking the fourth in the province. Online retail sales reached 1.502 billion yuan, up 38.28% year on year, ranking 11th in the province. Among the online retail sales, the physical online retail sales reached 741 million yuan, up 28.56% year on year; Service online retail sales reached 761 million yuan, up 49.26% year on year. The growth rates of online transaction volume, online retail sales, physical online retail sales and service online retail sales were 11.36%, 7.09%, 4.41% and 7.54% higher than that of the whole province, respectively.

3.2. Continuous creation of featured brands

Rural e-commerce focuses on building online sales brands. In Tmall, Jingdong, Pinduoduo and other large e-commerce platforms to establish Lianqiao, Dengjia, Hesheng pepper, Pu master and other agricultural products flagship stores more than 10, to create salt preserved egg, Lianqiao rice noodles, Ma Detian, Sichuan flavor food group, Qushan brand, Zhen Tian, farmers and other more than 50 famous and excellent products online sales brands.

3.3. Continuously optimize the development environment

Support enterprises to develop B2B, B2C, C2C, O2O and other third-party professional Internet e-commerce platforms, promote the integrated development of online and offline, and use third-party platforms to establish e-commerce marketing networks and expand market share. We will vigorously support the construction of logistics bases. We will actively introduce well-known domestic and foreign e-commerce enterprises to set up regional logistics centers or service bases in Guang’an to deepen the application of e-commerce. We will support university graduates and individual businesses to set up e-commerce incubation parks or agglomeration areas, and encourage local e-commerce enterprises to gather and develop.

4. Constraints on the Development of Rural E-commerce in Guang’an City

4.1. Insufficient supply of professionals

Due to the particularity of the rural e-commerce industry, a large number of compound talents are needed to master the production, logistics, packaging, storage, marketing and processing of agricultural products [6]. At present, the "hollowing out" of rural areas in Guang’an City is serious. The general education level of the surplus rural labor force is not high. Most young labor force goes out to work or settle down, and there is a lack of professional talents who understand such technology. According to the information released by Guang’an Municipal Bureau of Commerce, most enterprises in Guang’an City and the operation of characteristic agricultural products are in short supply of e-commerce, and there are problems such as poor circulation of recruitment information and low salary and treatment. At present, there are about 800 people engaged in e-commerce in the city, and only about 10% of them have e-commerce skills.

4.2. Cold chain logistics storage technology is weak

Guang’an city professional cold storage and refrigerated transport vehicles are limited, cold chain preservation and shock anti-corrosion technology is not high, which has become the biggest shortage restricting the export of Guang’an characteristic agricultural products. The main products sold by rural e-commerce in Guang’an City are characteristic fruits, such as blueberries, strawberries, grapes, etc. These fresh agricultural products have high technical requirements for cold chain logistics services. However, there are problems in the storage, packaging, transportation, chain break time and other links of the cold chain operation system in Guang’an City, which will damage the quality of fresh products. Secondly,
Guang’an city is located in the hills of eastern Sichuan province, the terrain is undulating, the climate conditions are bad, the natural disasters occur frequently, the transportation is inconvenient, and the villages and towns are far apart, the product chain break time is long. At present, some third-party logistics transportation in Guang’an city uses ordinary trucks, and there are few refrigerated trucks, and the cost of cold chain transportation is high.

4.3. Single financing channel

Based on the reality, the financing channels of rural e-commerce in Guang’an City are single, which restricts the development of rural e-commerce. Personal financial services in rural areas are still dominated by bank credit, which is not suitable for the economic development of rural areas; The coverage of commercial insurance services is limited, which is difficult to meet the growing market demand. In terms of financing, because traditional agricultural production is dominated by farmers, it is difficult to obtain bank loans or financial support through mortgage, so most agricultural subjects are difficult to obtain bank loans and mortgage support. In addition, in terms of financing channels, agricultural enterprises and individual farmers often have a high degree of information asymmetry. At the same time, compared with urban areas, rural areas are more backward, closed and conservative, so many e-commerce enterprises cannot establish and improve the modern enterprise system and market management mechanism in rural areas.

4.4. Characteristic brand construction is insufficient

It is understood that the current e-commerce transaction volume of agricultural products in the city has reached 728 million yuan, of which the online sales of agricultural products account for more than 90%. In the online sales of agricultural products, well-known featured product brands only account for 20%. First, the phenomenon of "small, mixed and scattered" of agricultural products brand in Guang’an city is prominent. The reason is that most of the self-employed people engaged in agricultural products e-commerce are farmers with low education level. Many products are only named after the region, and the brand construction and cultivation of characteristic products are insufficient. Second, the standardization of agricultural products is low, and the quality of online products is uneven, which makes it difficult to cultivate consumers' loyalty. The third is the lack of brand enterprises. In recent years, relying on third-party e-commerce platforms or self-built e-commerce platforms to carry out online sales of characteristic agricultural products, and constantly innovate in the packaging and sales of agricultural products. However, the city's rural e-commerce enterprises are generally small in scale, and their technological and commercial innovation capabilities are not strong, and there is a lack of leading rural e-commerce enterprises. Lacking the core enterprises of regional e-commerce industry cluster or the core enterprises of platform e-commerce operation and service, it is unable to form the characteristic brand of e-commerce innovation ecosystem.

4.5. The government support is insufficient

First of all, there is a lack of communication and consultation platform between government and enterprise. Although the relationship between government and enterprise is "clear", it is not "close". E-commerce enterprises have brought great vitality to the development of rural economy, but in the face of such rapid industrialization and urbanization process, most grassroots governments and e-commerce enterprises have not established an effective communication and consultation platform, and there is a lack of benign interaction between government and enterprises [7]. For example, the government often ignores the public's right to know and participation in the process of spatial planning and reconstruction of villages. Some e-commerce enterprises are completely unaware of local policy planning, let alone have no channels to participate in local public affairs. Due to the lack of daily communication, the notice related to water shutdown, power outage, Internet shutdown and other impacts on the normal operation of village community renovation are not timely communicated, resulting in the failure of enterprises to take countermeasures in advance, resulting in huge losses. Secondly, the public services of grassroots governments are absent, and the business environment of rural e-commerce industry still needs to be continuously optimized. The development of e-commerce has brought a large number of rural population back and economic prosperity of villagers, which urgently requires productive services such as finance, logistics and art design, as well as public services such as education, medical care and parks. Although rural e-commerce infrastructure conditions continue to improve, Internet and express delivery have basically achieved universal coverage, there is still a problem of absence of public services at the grass-roots level. Public infrastructure and services are seriously lagging behind the needs of rapid industrial development, especially the life service function is obviously insufficient.

5. The Optimization Path of Rural E-commerce development in Guang’an City

5.1. Strengthen the training of professional talents

First of all, in order to promote the development of e-commerce, Guang’an City should actively build an "Internet plus" platform, establish a city-level e-commerce public service center, local characteristic agricultural products to help farmers sales platform, establish an e-commerce training base of Guang’an Vocational and Technical College, Guang’an E-commerce branch and other platforms to attract e-commerce and solve the problem of talent shortage in enterprises. Secondly, we should carry out "face-to-face teaching + practical training" by means of multi-point, centralized and teaching, strengthen the talent training of e-commerce incubation center, and carry out batch and classified training for e-commerce leaders, e-commerce employees and grassroots government in charge, which can make the products and services of e-commerce more diversified and high-quality, and effectively solve the problem of rural e-commerce talent shortage. Finally, the training mode of e-commerce talents should be innovated. To promote rural e-commerce in easy to understand forms such as short videos and contests with prizes, so as to change the public’s concept and encourage farmers to participate in the development of rural e-commerce, so as to jointly promote the development of local economy.

5.2. We will strengthen the construction of cold chain logistics and storage facilities

The improvement of the quality of featured agricultural products cannot be separated from the support of high-tech cold
chain logistics, strengthen the cold chain logistics infrastructure, encourage enterprises to purchase environmentally friendly and energy-saving cold chain transport vehicles, promote the automatic detection and control system of temperature and humidity throughout the whole process, and improve the cold chain transport service level [8]. In the process of refrigerated transportation, temperature fluctuation is one of the main reasons for product deterioration. During transportation, “door-to-door” transportation should be organized as far as possible to avoid too long chain break time and ensure product quality. In addition, loading and unloading handling is also an important factor affecting the chain breaking time and product quality. Forklifts, automatic guided trucks, stash trucks and other mechanized equipment should be used to improve work efficiency as much as possible. For the perishable agricultural products in Guang’an city, a cold storage room is set up, and the cold storage is equipped with automatic temperature recorder, and only the accepted agricultural products are stored in storage, mutual odor of agricultural products are not placed in a storage room, the products in the warehouse have complete packaging, to avoid naked storage, so that the water loss of agricultural products; The cold storage sanitation should also be managed by special personnel, and the poor quality of agricultural products should be cleaned up in time.

5.3. We should improve and innovate financing channels

We will improve the support mechanism for agriculture-related financial institutions and the agricultural insurance service system to enhance farmers’ ability to prevent risks. Financial institutions should strengthen cooperation with the government and e-commerce enterprises to promote finance to the countryside. In addition to providing traditional financing services, they can also provide rural e-commerce with special funds for agricultural assistance and inclusive financial services in the form of government or enterprise guarantees, effectively lowering financing thresholds and increasing financing channels. In addition, financial enterprises can provide low-interest loans or business insurance to rural e-commerce enterprises to help prospective farmers or cooperatives start businesses, expand the rural e-commerce industry team, and avoid farmers from falling back into poverty due to entrepreneurial failure. E-commerce enterprises should also be encouraged to better integrate financial support, production technology and marketing into the whole industrial chain, and constantly innovate the mode of poverty alleviation through e-commerce.

5.4. We should promote the building of distinctive brands

Guang’an City should continue to strengthen the product characteristics and brand construction; Actively building the brand of rural e-commerce can not only strengthen the control and guarantee of the quality of the source agricultural products, but also enhance the brand influence and realize the premium of agricultural products, which is also an important driving force for the profit and sustainable development of agricultural e-commerce. Standardization is the key to the healthy and orderly development of agricultural e-commerce. In the process of agricultural production, the establishment and improvement of agricultural product quality control standards will help to improve the standardization level of agricultural products from the source; Guide enterprises to actively create famous brand products and famous trademarks, and cultivate a group of well-known enterprise brands with great influence at home and abroad. Encourage well-known e-commerce platforms to strengthen reciprocal cooperation with provincial leading agricultural enterprises and brand agricultural products management enterprises, actively promote brand agricultural products, improve market awareness, and expand online sales share. E-commerce enterprises and local agricultural production and marketing organizations are encouraged to jointly build online sales brands of agricultural products, improve product quality and added value, and avoid disorderly competition of similar products. Strive to create a series of brands such as “Yangcheng Lake hairy crab”, comprehensively improve the added value of Guang’an characteristic agricultural industry.

5.5. We will increase government support

First of all, we should give full play to the role of the government as a bridge between the market and enterprises [9], increase support and publicity for e-commerce featured towns, e-commerce entities, e-commerce logistics and e-commerce commodity brands, and enhance the guidance, pertinence and effectiveness of supporting policies. In the future, grassroots governments should cooperate with logistics enterprises and investment enterprises to optimize and upgrade local e-commerce network logistics, transportation lines and cold storage systems, so as to reduce costs and improve operational efficiency of rural e-commerce enterprises. Secondly, we should formulate local inclusive policies, scientifically plan the layout, realize efficient integration of resources, support leading enterprises and leisure food e-commerce to grow bigger and stronger, promote the agglomeration and development of small and micro e-commerce, extend the rural e-commerce industry chain, and enhance the development power of the city’s e-commerce. Finally, strengthen the macro guidance of the government. The government should guide the development of rural e-commerce in a clear direction, clear focus and various forms. It should pay attention to sinking the grassroots, explore the market situation, combine local advantages and formulate operational relevant policies according to local conditions.

6. Summary

In general, the rural e-commerce in Guang’an City is in a stage of steady development. Under the background of common prosperity in the new era, the development of rural e-commerce in Guang’an City has ushered in new opportunities, but also faces new challenges. The lack of professional knowledge of e-commerce practitioners, weak cold chain logistics storage technology, single financing channel, insufficient brand construction, insufficient government support and other prominent problems need to be solved urgently. Therefore, in order to achieve the high-quality development of rural e-commerce in Guang’an City, it is necessary to improve the quality of practitioners, strengthen the training of rural e-commerce professionals, strengthen the construction of logistics infrastructure, improve and innovate financing channels, promote the construction of characteristic brands, and strengthen the government support, so that rural e-commerce can develop steadily, improve the living standards of farmers, and finally achieve common prosperity.

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