



Research on international trade development path of small and medium-sized enterprises in the context of e-commerce trade

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history: RECEIVED 14 October 2024 ACCEPTED 21 October 2024 PUBLISHED 25 October 2024</p> <p>Keywords:</p> <p>E-commerce; International trade</p>	<p>With the rapid development of Internet technology and the advancement of globalization, e-commerce has become an important part of international trade activities. In this context, how to expand the international market and enhance the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises with the help of e-commerce trading platform has become a hot issue in current research. This paper first summarizes the development of e-commerce trade and its impact on the international trade of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and then analyzes the current situation and main problems of the international trade of small and medium-sized enterprises. On this basis, it puts forward the development path and strategy of SMEs' international trade under the background of e-commerce trade, including establishing e-commerce trade platform, strengthening supply chain management, utilizing cross-border e-commerce, strengthening brand building, and innovating service mode. This paper aims to provide theoretical support and practical guidance for SMEs to carry out international trade under the background of e-commerce trade.</p>

1. Overview of e-commerce trade background

1.1 Definition and development of e-commerce trade

E-commerce trade, also known as electronic commerce trade, refers to a business model that utilizes the internet and digital technologies for the purchase, sale, exchange, and related activities of goods and services. It encompasses all transactional activities conducted through electronic platforms and involves multiple aspects. Currently, the understanding of e-commerce trade can be divided into two perspectives: broad and narrow. From a broad perspective, the essence of e-commerce trade remains unchanged; it is still an online transaction activity. The development of e-commerce trade activities is influenced by the quality and speed of logistics delivery. From a narrow perspective, e-commerce trade exhibits various forms, among which cross-border e-commerce is particularly relevant to small and medium-sized enterprises engaged in international trade. Cross-border e-commerce refers to the trading process of goods and services conducted by trade entities located in different countries and regions, relying on cross-border e-commerce platforms via the Internet.

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<https://doi.org/10.70702/bdb/AGBY9651>

E-commerce trade has evolved from simple online transactions into a complex, intelligent, and globalized business ecosystem, profoundly impacting consumer habits and market structures. Initially, it began with the B2B model, which involves electronic commerce transactions between businesses. This was followed by the B2C model, where businesses engage in electronic commerce transactions with consumers. More recently, the rise of the C2C model, which facilitates transactions between consumers, has further diversified the forms of e-commerce trade.

1.2 Characteristics of cross-border e-commerce

First, Global Nature. The e-commerce industry, reliant on the internet, exhibits characteristics of decentralization and globality. Compared to traditional trade models, the boundaries of cross-border e-commerce transactions have become increasingly blurred. Leveraging internet platforms allows for the global sharing of product information, effectively reducing the likelihood of risks arising from differences in culture, religion, and legal frameworks between buyers and sellers.

Second, Intangibility. In addition to traditional tangible goods, cross-border e-commerce involves a significant number of intangible goods, often referred to as digital products or digital services. These intangible goods enter the circulation phase in the form of data codes and rely on blockchain technology to ensure security during the flow and transaction processes. This enables trade activities to occur and be completed in an intangible manner.

Third, Immediacy. Digital information circulates rapidly on internet platforms, with transmission speeds unaffected by geographical distance. Therefore, compared to traditional cross-border trade models, the trade activities conducted through cross-border e-commerce can complete information gathering and dissemination in a remarkably short time. The rapid development of cross-border e-commerce has broken the constraints of traditional cross-border trade models in terms of time and space, allowing trade activities to take place anytime and anywhere, thereby gradually forming a new pattern of international trade centered around cross-border e-commerce platforms.

1.3 The impact of e-commerce trade on the international trade of SMEs

The emergence of e-commerce undoubtedly presents a significant opportunity for small and medium-sized enterprises. In traditional international trade, SMEs often face challenges in competing with larger enterprises due to limitations in capital and scale. E-commerce disrupts this paradigm, enabling SMEs to enter international markets at a lower cost.

Firstly, e-commerce reduces the market entry costs for SMEs. Through online platforms, SMEs can directly reach potential customers globally without the need to establish physical sales outlets overseas. E-commerce enables small and medium-sized enterprises to overcome geographical limitations and reach global consumers. Through online marketing and social media, SMEs can promote their brands and products more widely, attracting a larger international customer base. This expansion not only increases sales revenue but also helps businesses diversify market risks and reduce dependence on a single market. E-commerce facilitates more effective brand image establishment for SMEs. By employing strategies such as search engine optimization (SEO), social media marketing, and online advertising, companies can enhance their brand visibility on a global scale. Particularly among younger consumers, online brand influence can directly translate into purchasing power, presenting significant market opportunities for SMEs. Secondly, e-

commerce enhances the transaction efficiency for SMEs. In traditional international trade, transactions often require multiple rounds of negotiations and consultations; however, e-commerce platforms simplify this process, allowing transactions to be completed online from order placement to payment. Finally, e-commerce provides SMEs with access to more market data and analytical tools. With these resources, SMEs can better grasp market dynamics and customer demands, allowing them to formulate more precise market strategies.

1.4 Market opportunities and challenges in the context of e-commerce trade

In the context of e-commerce trade, the market presents unprecedented opportunities. With the continuous increase in the number of global internet users, the potential of the e-commerce market is immense. This is particularly true in emerging market countries, where the inadequacies of traditional retail systems provide greater room for the growth of e-commerce trade. However, e-commerce trade also poses numerous challenges.

Firstly, the difficulty of market access is one of the major issues faced by small and medium-sized enterprises in the context of e-commerce trade and their pathways for international trade development. Different countries have distinct legal and regulatory frameworks, including trade barriers, import restrictions, and intellectual property protection requirements, which create formidable legal obstacles for SMEs. Therefore, SMEs need to possess global legal awareness and understand and comply with the trade regulations of various countries to ensure that their products or services can enter the target markets legally and smoothly. Secondly, the international market's standards for products and services also constrain SMEs. There may be significant differences in the standards regarding product quality, safety, and environmental protection across different countries, requiring SMEs to invest substantial time and resources to meet these standards. Consequently, producing products that comply with international standards and obtaining the relevant certifications and tests pose significant challenges for SMEs. This is particularly true for certain technologically advanced products that require specialized certifications, necessitating extra efforts from SMEs to ensure compliance with international market standards.

Logistics issues represent another significant challenge for small and medium-sized enterprises in their paths to international trade within the context of e-commerce. First, high transportation costs are a common problem faced by SMEs. International transportation involves a long-distance, multi-step process, which includes various stages such as transportation, customs clearance, and distribution. The cost factors associated with these stages are quite complex. Due to their smaller scale, SMEs may not benefit from the advantages of bulk transactions, resulting in relatively higher transportation costs that negatively impact the price competitiveness of their products in the international market. Second, the risks of damage and loss of goods are prevalent in the logistics of international trade for SMEs. Factors such as long-distance transport, complicated transshipment processes, and potential variations in transport standards can expose goods to damage from compression, vibration, and temperature changes during transit, leading to loss or damage. This can result in significant economic losses for SMEs and may also affect customers' trust in their products. Third, extended transportation times are another factor impacting SMEs in international trade. Since different segments of the international logistics chain require varying durations, SMEs may struggle to ensure that goods arrive within the expected timeframe of their customers. This not only affects customer satisfaction but can also lead to missed business opportunities, particularly with clients who are sensitive to delivery timelines.

In the context of e-commerce trade, a significant issue faced by small and medium-sized enterprises in the development of international trade is the neglect of brand building. First, ignoring brand development can lead to a lack of differentiated competitive advantage for SMEs in the international market. In the e-commerce era, consumers place greater emphasis on brand image and quality assurance. If SMEs overlook brand building, their products may be perceived as generic goods, making it challenging to stand out in a highly competitive market. A differentiated brand positioning can help enterprises identify their unique attributes in a homogeneous market, attracting the attention of more target customers. Second, neglecting brand construction may result in a lack of trust and reputation for SMEs in the international market. In cross-border trade, consumers and partners often face language, cultural, and regulatory differences; thus, trust in a brand becomes a crucial factor in determining the success of transactions. Without a well-established brand image, consumers may harbor doubts about the quality of products or services, impacting their purchasing decisions. Additionally, partners are more likely to collaborate with influential brand enterprises, causing SMEs to miss out on potential collaboration opportunities in the international market. Third, the lack of focus on brand development may also hinder SMEs' ability to achieve premium pricing in the international market, leading to a struggle with price competition and adversely affecting their profit margins. Building a strong brand not only increases the recognition of products or services but also adds value, making consumers more willing to pay higher prices for those products.

1.5 The value of promoting the rapid development of cross-border e-commerce

On one hand, the development of the cross-border e-commerce industry facilitates the transformation and upgrading of traditional trade models. By promoting cross-border e-commerce, traditional offline cross-border trade models can transition into a more integrated approach where online and offline trade modes coexist harmoniously. This integration effectively addresses key issues such as the inefficient flow of production factors, information barriers that hinder trade information sharing, and poor communication between buyers and sellers inherent in traditional offline cross-border trade activities. It fully leverages the flexibility and speed characteristic of the cross-border e-commerce industry, enhancing the offline cross-border trade supply chain and promoting the concurrent development of online and offline cross-border trade.

On the other hand, cross-border e-commerce significantly reduces trade costs. Compared to traditional offline cross-border trade models, cross-border e-commerce exhibits notable cost advantages in areas such as information flow, natural sharing, product display, and after-sales services. By utilizing advanced AI technologies and cloud computing, it is possible to automate certain processes within cross-border trade, thereby substantially lowering trade costs and simplifying the overall cross-border trade process, effectively streamlining international trade activities.

2. Analysis of international trade status of small and medium-sized enterprises

2.1 Overview of the development of international trade of SMEs

In recent years, with the acceleration of globalization, the international trade activities of small and medium-sized enterprises have become increasingly frequent. These enterprises demonstrate remarkable vitality in the international market due to their flexibility, innovation, and market sensitivity. They not only account for a significant share of international trade in terms of quantity but also meet the diverse needs of global consumers by providing a wide range of

products and services in terms of quality. On the policy front, governments worldwide have gradually recognized the important role of SMEs in driving economic growth and increasing employment. Consequently, they have implemented various policies and measures to support SMEs in participating in international trade. For example, efforts such as simplifying import and export procedures, offering tax incentives, and providing financing support encourage SMEs to expand into international markets.

2.2 Main problems of international trade of SMEs

Despite the significant potential of small and medium-sized enterprises in international trade, they face numerous challenges and issues. Firstly, due to a lack of sufficient funding and resources, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) often face financial constraints when exploring international markets. This limitation hampers their ability to engage in market promotion and brand building, making it difficult for them to compete with established international brands. Secondly, international trade involves complex legal regulations and compliance requirements, which place higher demands on the international operational capabilities of SMEs. Moreover, the customer base for SMEs engaged in international trade consists of individuals from various countries, encompassing a wide range of academic disciplines, including law, internet technology, foreign languages, and credit services. This diversity raises the bar for the qualifications of e-commerce trade professionals. In recent years, many SMEs in China have relied on e-commerce channels to promote their international trade activities, creating an urgent demand for a large number of highly qualified, multidisciplinary international trade talents. However, due to their relatively small operational scale and significant financial constraints, SMEs often lack adequate talent reserves compared to larger enterprises. Consequently, they are unable to provide more competitive and higher-paying employment opportunities, leading to a significant loss of high-level talent from many SMEs.

2.3 The role of e-commerce trade in promoting the international trade of SMEs

The rapid development of e-commerce has provided a new platform for small and medium-sized enterprises to engage in international trade. E-commerce platforms have eliminated the geographical and temporal limitations of traditional trade, enabling SMEs to more easily access global markets and consumers. Through these platforms, SMEs can showcase their products and services, directly communicate and transact with potential customers, thereby significantly lowering the barriers to entry and costs associated with entering international markets.

Furthermore, e-commerce platforms offer a wealth of market data and consumer behavior analysis tools, which assist SMEs in better understanding market demands and consumer preferences. This enables them to formulate more precise marketing strategies and directions for product innovation. Additionally, the evaluation and feedback systems available on these platforms allow SMEs to promptly receive customer reviews and suggestions regarding their products and services, facilitating ongoing improvements and optimizations in product and service quality.

Commerce trade also enhances the connection and integration of SMEs with international supply chains. Through e-commerce platforms, SMEs can more conveniently find high-quality suppliers and partners, enabling optimized allocation and sharing of resources. This not only improves the production efficiency and cost control capabilities of SMEs but also aids them in establishing more stable and efficient international supply chain networks.

3. Development path of international trade of SMEs in the context of e-commerce trade

3.1 Establish e-commerce trading platform and expand market channels

In the era of e-commerce, having an efficient and professional e-commerce trading platform is crucial for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) seeking to expand into international markets. By establishing e-commerce trading platforms, businesses can break geographical limitations and directly connect with global consumers, thereby significantly broadening their market channels. First and foremost, selecting the appropriate e-commerce platform is essential. SMEs should choose a suitable e-commerce platform for collaboration based on their product characteristics and target markets, such as Amazon or Alibaba. These platforms offer established operational models and a vast user base, enabling companies to quickly enter international markets. Additionally, optimizing store operations is a vital aspect of enhancing the effectiveness of e-commerce platforms. SMEs need to focus on the design of product detail pages, providing clear and accurate product information. They should also optimize keywords and store descriptions to improve their ranking in search engine results, thereby attracting more potential customers. Furthermore, actively engaging in online marketing activities is an effective means to enhance the performance of e-commerce platforms. SMEs can utilize various methods, such as social media and online advertising, to promote their brands and increase visibility.

3.2 Strengthen supply chain management and enhance competitiveness

In international trade, supply chain management is directly related to the operational costs and customer service quality of enterprises. For small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), strengthening supply chain management not only helps to reduce costs and improve efficiency but also enhances the competitiveness of businesses in the international market. Firstly, optimizing inventory management is a core aspect of supply chain management. SMEs need to establish a scientific inventory management system, utilizing rational inventory planning and real-time inventory monitoring to avoid issues such as excess inventory and stockouts. Furthermore, advanced inventory management technologies, such as real-time inventory update systems and intelligent replenishment reminders, can be employed to enhance inventory management efficiency. Secondly, strengthening supplier collaboration is a crucial measure for improving supply chain stability. SMEs should establish close partnerships with upstream and downstream stakeholders within the supply chain to jointly share information, resources, and technologies, thereby enhancing the efficiency of the entire supply chain. This includes forging strong relationships with suppliers to ensure timely delivery and quality control of raw materials, as well as developing strategic partnerships with logistics companies to optimize transportation routes, reduce logistics costs, and accelerate delivery times. Collaborative efforts can effectively address bottlenecks within the supply chain and improve overall performance. Additionally, it is essential to conduct regular evaluations and audits of suppliers to ensure that their quality and delivery timelines meet the requirements of the enterprise.

3.3 Use cross-border e-commerce to expand the global market

With the widespread adoption of the internet and the rapid development of e-commerce, cross-border e-commerce has become a crucial avenue for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to expand into global markets. Through cross-border e-commerce platforms, SMEs can overcome geographical limitations and directly connect with consumers worldwide, achieving international sales of their products. Firstly, selecting the appropriate cross-border e-commerce

platform is essential. SMEs can choose platforms that align with their product characteristics and target markets, such as Amazon, eBay, and Wish. These platforms possess a global operational model and a vast user base, enabling companies to swiftly enter international markets. Secondly, optimizing product information is a vital aspect of cross-border e-commerce sales. SMEs need to focus on the design of product detail pages, providing clear and accurate product information, including descriptions, specifications, and usage instructions. Additionally, it is important to offer product information in multiple languages to cater to the needs of consumers from different countries and regions.

3.4 Strengthen brand building and increase the added value of products

Brands symbolize corporate image and reputation, serving as an essential basis for consumers to identify and select products. In the context of e-commerce, enhancing brand development is crucial for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to increase product added value and competitiveness. Firstly, SMEs should deeply explore their core competencies and unique values, using these as a foundation for brand positioning. In the era of e-commerce, companies need to focus not only on product quality and functionality but also on emotional resonance and experiential value associated with the brand. By uncovering the uniqueness of their products or services and integrating this into their brand story, businesses can establish a stronger emotional connection with consumers and create a distinctive brand image. Moreover, SMEs must employ multi-channel marketing strategies to enhance brand visibility. In e-commerce, digital media and social platforms serve as vital tools for brand communication. Companies can utilize social media, content marketing, and search engine optimization to convey brand information to a broader audience. Additionally, participating in international trade exhibitions and industry events is an essential way to increase brand exposure, allowing direct interaction with potential customers and showcasing the company's strengths and characteristics. Establishing a brand image also necessitates attention to brand consistency and stability. SMEs should ensure that their brand messages remain consistent across different markets, channels, and media, thereby forming a unified brand image. Through continuous brand promotion and marketing activities, they can strengthen brand recognition and recall, making it easier for consumers to connect with the brand. Stability also implies that enterprises need to maintain quality and credibility over the long term to enhance brand trustworthiness. Furthermore, SMEs should prioritize brand experience and customer relationship management. In the e-commerce age, user experience is one of the crucial factors for brand success. By providing a positive shopping experience, efficient customer service, and personalized products or services, companies can increase customer goodwill towards the brand and foster customer loyalty. Actively leveraging user reviews and social media feedback enables businesses to stay informed about market dynamics, adjust brand strategies, and continuously improve brand adaptability and attractiveness.

3.5 Innovative service model to improve customer satisfaction

In the context of e-commerce, customer experience and service quality are vital components of a company's competitive edge. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) must innovate their service models to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty, thereby standing out in the fierce market competition. First and foremost, providing personalized services is crucial. SMEs can utilize data analytics tools to understand consumer needs and purchasing behaviors, enabling them to offer tailored product recommendations and shopping experiences. Additionally, they can provide customized products and services to meet the diverse demands of different consumers.

Furthermore, a comprehensive after-sales service system is essential for improving customer satisfaction. SMEs need to establish effective after-sales support mechanisms to address consumer complaints and issues promptly, offering services such as returns, exchanges, and repairs. By delivering high-quality after-sales services, companies can gain consumer trust and foster positive word-of-mouth promotion.

3.6 Establish a cross-border cooperation network

Establishing a cross-border cooperation network is crucial for the development of international trade among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the context of e-commerce. To successfully establish such a network, SMEs need to adopt a series of strategic measures to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of their partnerships.

Firstly, SMEs must clearly define their internationalization strategy and cooperation objectives. By clarifying their positioning in the international market, target customer groups, and areas of cooperation, SMEs can effectively filter suitable partners. Based on their product characteristics, market demands, and development directions, SMEs can determine the types of partners they need, such as manufacturers, distributors, or logistics service providers, thereby establishing a more targeted cooperation network.

Secondly, SMEs should actively participate in international trade fairs, business negotiation meetings, and industry seminars to identify potential partners. Through these activities, SMEs can expand their networks, gain insights into market dynamics, and engage directly with potential partners, which helps establish genuine and effective business relationships. Additionally, by participating in industry associations and chambers of commerce, SMEs can become familiar with industry standards and regulations, providing a more reliable foundation for cooperation. Thirdly, SMEs should leverage the internet and e-commerce platforms to actively seek cooperation partners. E-commerce platforms provide a global business environment where SMEs can find and contact international partners online. This includes B2B platforms, specialized industry platforms, and cross-border e-commerce platforms. Through these platforms, SMEs can more easily screen potential partners, conduct online business negotiations, and reduce the costs and risks associated with finding collaborators. Finally, establishing a cross-border cooperation network necessitates the creation of effective communication and information-sharing mechanisms. SMEs should maintain close communication with their partners to ensure timely transmission and sharing of information. Signing formal contracts and agreements that clarify the rights and responsibilities of both parties can help mitigate potential cooperation risks. Furthermore, by establishing liaison personnel and contact points, SMEs can ensure that issues are addressed promptly and that the interests of all parties involved are coordinated throughout the collaboration.

4. Development strategies of SMEs in the context of e-commerce trade

4.1 Formulate e-commerce trade development plan

In the context of e-commerce trade, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) must first develop a scientific and reasonable e-commerce trade development plan to achieve sustained and stable growth. This plan should take into account the actual circumstances of the enterprise and market demand, clearly defining the development goals, market positioning, competitive strategies, and implementation steps of the enterprise. Firstly, SMEs need to clarify their development goals. Enterprises can establish short-term, medium-term, and long-term e-commerce trade development

objectives based on factors such as their resource conditions, market environment, and competitive landscape. Short-term goals may focus on sales growth and market expansion, while medium- to long-term objectives could emphasize brand building and technological innovation. Secondly, SMEs must define their market positioning. In the field of e-commerce trade, the accuracy of market positioning directly impacts the survival and development of the enterprise. By conducting market research and analysis, enterprises can understand the needs and competitive dynamics of their target market, and, by leveraging their product characteristics and advantages, determine target market segmentation and positioning strategies. Finally, SMEs need to establish implementation steps and timelines. The implementation of the e-commerce trade development plan should be conducted in phases, with each phase having clear objectives and tasks. Enterprises should be prepared to make timely adjustments and optimizations to the plan based on their actual situation and market changes, ensuring effective execution of the plan.

4.2 Strengthen personnel training and introduction

In the context of e-commerce trade, talent is the core competitiveness for enterprise development. For small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to stand out in the fierce market competition, it is essential to focus on talent cultivation and recruitment. Firstly, SMEs should enhance the internal training of international trade talents. By strengthening employee training, SMEs can improve their employees' professional competencies in the field of international trade, including knowledge of international trade regulations, cross-cultural communication, market research, and negotiation skills. Through internal training, enterprises can better cultivate employees who understand the rules of the international market and possess professional skills, thereby providing strong support for the development of international trade operations. Secondly, SMEs can introduce professional international trade talents by collaborating with universities and research institutions. Cooperation with universities can be facilitated through the establishment of internship programs and joint laboratories, attracting outstanding graduates from international trade programs to join the enterprise.

Meanwhile, collaboration with research institutions can bring cutting-edge research results and professional knowledge, injecting new thinking and innovative vitality into the enterprise. This approach to talent recruitment not only helps fill the talent gaps within the enterprise but also enhances the company's professional competitiveness in the international market. Additionally, SMEs can form cross-cultural teams to improve the cross-cultural communication and language capabilities of their international trade talents. E-commerce trade often involves partners from different countries and regions, making it necessary for enterprises to build teams equipped with cross-cultural communication skills to reduce misunderstandings and enhance collaboration efficiency. A multilingual talent team can better understand cultural differences across various countries and regions, facilitating smooth international trade cooperation. Moreover, SMEs can attract more aspiring international trade professionals by implementing talent exchange programs and participating in international trade talent training initiatives. Such approaches not only assist in attracting experienced professionals in international trade but also enable enterprises to stay informed about the latest developments and trends in the international market, thereby enhancing their insights and adaptability in international trade.

4.3 Build a good e-commerce ecosystem

In the context of e-commerce trade, it is essential for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to build a robust e-commerce ecosystem in order to achieve sustained and stable development. A healthy e-commerce ecosystem can provide enterprises with a stable operational environment, abundant resource support, and extensive market opportunities, thereby enhancing their competitiveness and growth potential. First, SMEs need to actively establish strong collaborative relationships with e-commerce platforms, logistics service providers, payment institutions, and other relevant stakeholders. By closely working with these key partners, enterprises can gain broader exposure and sales channels, improving product circulation efficiency and user experience. Furthermore, collaborative efforts with partners can help reduce operational costs and enhance operational efficiency. Second, SMEs should focus on the diversified development of the e-commerce ecosystem. A diverse e-commerce ecosystem can offer enterprises a variety of products and services to meet the personalized needs of consumers. Therefore, SMEs can actively seek cross-industry collaboration opportunities to expand their product lines and business scope. By continually innovating and optimizing their offerings, they can provide consumers with richer and higher-quality products and services.

4.4 Strengthen cyber security and trade supervision

In the context of e-commerce, the issue of cybersecurity has become increasingly prominent. For small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), strengthening cybersecurity measures is not only essential for protecting the interests of the enterprise and the rights of consumers, but also a critical factor in enhancing corporate reputation and competitiveness. Firstly, SMEs need to establish a comprehensive information security management system and operational procedures. By clearly defining the responsibilities, rights, and obligations related to information security management, organizations can regulate employees' online behaviors and operational processes, thereby reducing information security risks. Additionally, enterprises should conduct regular cybersecurity risk assessments and vulnerability scans to promptly identify and address potential security threats. Secondly, SMEs must focus on the research and application of cybersecurity technologies. By adopting advanced cybersecurity technologies and equipment, organizations can enhance the protective capabilities of their network systems. For instance, the implementation of firewalls, intrusion detection systems, and data encryption can help safeguard the enterprise network against attacks and the risk of data breaches.

The international trade market is characterized by complex competition, and cross-border e-commerce enterprises operate on the front lines of economic and trade development. To ensure that these enterprises can conduct their operations in an orderly manner, it is essential to base their management systems on the specific business models they employ. This involves constructing targeted management policies that coordinate the rights and obligations among various departments, ultimately achieving a balance of power. Specifically, the approval process for operational decisions should embody both supervisory and democratic elements, with oversight departments fulfilling their responsibilities to monitor every aspect of trade activities, thereby ensuring the smooth progression of cross-border trade. Furthermore, there should be an optimization and restructuring of departmental responsibilities. Departments with overlapping functions should be consolidated to streamline the organizational framework of cross-border e-commerce enterprises. This approach not only effectively reduces operational costs but also clarifies the direct accountability for each production and operational link. Consequently, it helps to prevent the phenomenon of departments shifting blame when issues arise in cross-border commercial activities, fostering a healthy ecosystem for international trade.

4.5 Continue to innovate and adapt to market changes

In the context of e-commerce trade, the market is rapidly changing, and competition is becoming increasingly fierce. For small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to remain competitive, they must continuously innovate and adapt to market changes. Firstly, SMEs need to focus on innovation in products and services. By gaining a deep understanding of consumer needs and market trends, they can consistently launch innovative, differentiated, and high-value-added products and services. Moreover, it is essential for these enterprises to prioritize product quality and user experience, continually optimizing product design and functionality to enhance competitiveness and market recognition. Secondly, SMEs should emphasize innovation in marketing and promotion. In the e-commerce sector, marketing and promotion are crucial tools for acquiring market share and enhancing brand awareness. SMEs can leverage new marketing strategies such as social media, short videos, and live streaming to establish closer connections and interactions with consumers. Additionally, by utilizing technologies such as big data and artificial intelligence, these enterprises can implement precise marketing and personalized recommendations, thereby improving marketing effectiveness and conversion rates.

4.6 Master the rules of international trade

Compared to domestic trade activities, cross-border e-commerce operations face higher risks and are often subjected to unexpected events, such as abnormal fluctuations in international commodity and raw material prices or insufficient international transport capacity. To effectively mitigate these risks, e-commerce companies need to employ SWOT analysis to examine and summarize potential risks and the company's own weaknesses, especially in relation to potential risks, which need to be classified.

Firstly, there are unavoidable risks. These risks are caused by complex factors and have a high probability of occurrence, such as rising raw material prices, industry technological upgrades, or changes in commercial policies of target countries. For such risks, it is necessary to develop contingency plans and attempt to hedge the risks by maintaining backup supply chains and exploring new overseas markets. Secondly, there are avoidable risks. These risks primarily arise from poor internal management, which can be mitigated by optimizing and upgrading the internal management systems of cross-border e-commerce companies. It is essential to hire professionals to help establish a structured framework, ensuring that cross-border e-commerce companies can develop steadily.

4.7 Use ODR mechanism to resolve cross-border e-commerce trade disputes

With the booming development of the cross-border e-commerce industry, disputes in cross-border e-commerce have gradually increased. The traditional trade dispute resolution model has become inadequate due to its high costs and delayed feedback, failing to meet the needs of the evolving cross-border e-commerce sector. Cross-border e-commerce enterprises urgently require an online dispute resolution (ODR) mechanism that is immediate, cost-effective, and convenient. In this context, the ODR mechanism is gradually taking shape.

On one hand, to ensure the ODR mechanism's universality in the domestic e-commerce sector, it is essential to respond comprehensively to cross-border e-commerce disputes through legislative measures during the top-level design phase. Traditional offline trade disputes and online e-commerce disputes exhibit significant differences, necessitating the refinement of rules within

the existing legal framework. Specifically, it is vital to base the legislation on current representative online dispute resolution platforms, clearly defining the jurisdictional scope for e-commerce disputes and planning corresponding pilot projects. These projects should allow for a degree of rule-making as long as they do not contravene existing laws, summarizing institutional experiences to support the ODR mechanism.

On the other hand, it is crucial to differentiate between online litigation, on-site mediation, and online arbitration, providing procedural rules for each dispute resolution mechanism. The "dual-track" dispute resolution mechanism of UNCITRAL can serve as a reference to enhance the flexibility of the online dispute resolution mechanism in cross-border e-commerce.

With the rise of e-commerce and the increasing integration of the global market, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are facing unprecedented opportunities and challenges. E-commerce not only transforms traditional business models but also provides SMEs with a springboard for entering international markets. In this era of transformation, SMEs must closely follow the development trends of e-commerce and flexibly adjust their business strategies to adapt to the ever-changing market demands. In the future, as technology continues to advance and the market environment evolves, the paths for international trade development among SMEs in the context of e-commerce will also continuously change. We anticipate that SMEs will seize these opportunities, embrace innovation, and persistently expand into international markets, thereby making greater contributions to the prosperity and development of the global economy.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all those who contributed to the completion of this project. First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, WuYan, for her invaluable guidance, support, and encouragement throughout the research process. Her insight and expertise were instrumental in shaping my work and ensuring its success. A special thank you goes to my colleagues and friends, FuJingTao, for his camaraderie and support during challenging times. The discussions we had and the laughter we shared made this journey enjoyable and fulfilling. I am grateful to my family for their unwavering support and belief in my abilities. Their encouragement has been my source of strength, and I could not have accomplished this without them. Finally, I would like to thank [Any Funding Sources or Institutions] for providing the resources necessary for this research. Its support made it possible to carry out this work effectively. Thank you all for your contributions and support.

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