

A Brief Analysis on the Application of the New Mode of "Commodity Live Broadcasting" in Cross-border E-commerce

-- A Case Study of Shopee

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Abstract

As one of the rapid development of cross-border e-commerce in recent years, its development has attracted the attention of many scholars and experts. The live broadcasting of goods driven by the Internet celebrity economy is also constantly impacting the development of offline supply chains and becoming a new economic growth point. The evolution of the "Internet Plus" era and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic have also incubated an excellent platform for the combination of cross-border e-commerce and live broadcasting of goods. Based on the current situation of cross-border live broadcasting industry, this paper studies this development mode, which is conducive to promoting the transformation and upgrading of China's cross-border e-commerce platform, and confirms that "cross-border live broadcasting" will drive the long-term development of the industry with new operation mode. This paper aims to study whether the combination of "cross-border e-commerce + live commerce" can promote the development of Chinese foreign trade industry. What countermeasures should be taken to solve the problems at present. By taking Shopee, a cross-border e-commerce platform that has developed rapidly in recent years, as a sample. SWOT analysis is conducted to study the advantages and disadvantages, opportunities and threats of live delivery on Shopee platform, and specific problems are analyzed to make this paper more applicable. In order to solve the existing problems in cross-border live broadcasting, the author suggests that cross-border live broadcasting should be interactive, localized and standardized, and do stick to the front, in order to get considerable development.

Keywords

Live broadcasting; Cross-border e-commerce; Shopee.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of Topic Selection

In the middle and late 1990s, Internet-based cross-border e-commerce began to flourish with the emerging technology. With the application of technology, the global economy continues to integrate, and the market size of cross-border e-commerce continues to expand. Cross-border e-commerce will transfer traditional sales channel to the network platform, breaking through the impact of geographical conditions. Driven by economic globalization, cross-border e-commerce has developed rapidly. As an emerging form of trade, cross-border e-commerce has the advantages of openness, globalization, low cost and high efficiency, and effectively promotes the rapid development of Chinese economy. However, at the end of 2019, with the outbreak of COVID-19, the growth of international trade was slow, and there were major bottlenecks in logistics, transportation and sales channels. However, due to the influence of

China's domestic e-commerce live broadcasting, many e-commerce platforms have also introduced live broadcasting into cross-border sales. Due to the high timeliness and experience of live broadcasting, consumers' desire to buy has increased and large profits have been obtained. Cross-border e-commerce and live commerce have also become a new blue ocean market. The 2020 China Canton Fair has pushed cross-border live broadcasting to a historical height.

As an emerging cross-border e-commerce platform for the Southeast Asian market, Shopee has been growing rapidly since its establishment in 2015, with the order volume breaking new records and achieving a growth rate of 398.8% from 2017 to 2019. There is huge potential in the e-commerce market. Shopee launched live broadcasting in the one-month Great Shopee promotion activity. The sellers who participated in the live broadcast activity gave positive feedback, and the sales volume achieved a maximum growth of 75%. The trend of cross-border e-commerce as a new outlet became more and more obvious.

However, as a new industry emerging in the last two years, cross-border e-commerce live broadcasting is facing many challenges. As a key factor of live broadcasting, there are major problems in the supervision of anchors. Fake marketing and transaction risks have become factors affecting consumers' confidence in this industry. Many people saw the benefits of the new thing, and more businesses flocked to the new blue ocean market. It can be seen that the supervision of cross-border e-commerce live broadcasting and how to integrate live broadcasting with cross-border e-commerce have become issues we need to study.

Of course, the study of new situation and regulatory issues of cross-border e-commerce and "live commerce" in the use of the market is less, and most studies focused on theoretical aspects and the present situation of cross-border electricity, the influence on trade in goods, cross-border e-commerce process, legal system, logistics, third-party payment, etc. Fewer involve sales models. There are much qualitative research literature, but few empirical studies and lack of systematic analysis.

1.2. Literature Review

1.2.1. Foreign Research States

Cross-border e-commerce live broadcasting is an emerging sales method in the past two years. There are still few studies on cross-border e-commerce live broadcasting in foreign countries, but some scholars have made researches on cross-border e-commerce and live commerce. At present, foreign academic circles have not yet formed a unified definition of the application mode of cross-border e-commerce live broadcasting, but they all have a consensus on its core, that is, to take a place in the wave of cross-border e-commerce market by analyzing and comparing their own advantages and disadvantages with their business mind.

Earlier, Iranian scholars Abbas Asosheh, Hadi Shahid-Nejad, Hourieh Khodkari (2012) studied the localization model of cross-border e-commerce. They propose to flexibly solve cross-border B2B transactions from the three aspects of message layer, business process layer and content layer, which is the initial improvement of the transaction mode of cross-border e-commerce industry. However, since cross-border e-commerce was still in the preliminary exploration stage at that time, the research was only limited to the preliminary problem solving.

Subsequently, Putri Mei Elisabeth Siahaan & Maryani Septiana (2019) analyzed the advantages and disadvantages of Shopee's online store from the level of marketing strategy. By measuring internal and external factors and competition profile matrix, it is concluded that Shopee stores should focus on product research and development and market development in order to expand customers and increase income. By studying the advantages, disadvantages and opportunities of Shopee stores, the scholar summarized the ways for Shopee stores to survive through data analysis, but did not put forward innovative crisis solutions.

Qin Lv of Malaysia (2020) analyzed the current situation of live broadcasting and merchandising in the context of COVID-19, summarized the future development trend of live broadcasting and merchandising in terms of social media, stars and network celebrities from the perspective of sales objectives of live broadcasting influencers and put forward prospects. Through comparative analysis, it puts forward the influencing factors of China's live broadcast delivery, which has a valuable reference for the standardization of China's live broadcast delivery and its influence on consumers.

It can be seen that with the development of the Internet, foreign scholars focus on how to develop and solve the problems existing in the development of cross-border e-commerce, and there are few studies on the combination of cross-border e-commerce and live delivery mode.

1.2.2. Domestic Research States

In contrast, due to the prosperity of China's manufacturing industry, products made in China are trusted by consumers both at home and abroad in terms of quality and quality control, and the trend of China's cross-border e-commerce is also protected by national policies. In this context, domestic scholars carry out relevant research.

Marco Hualong (2018), focusing on the communication strategies of cross-border e-commerce platforms, analyzed the communication characteristics of cross-border e-commerce, and took Aliexpress as the representative platform of cross-border export in China to analyze the advantages of platforms and existing marketing shortcomings, and propose solutions in the aspects of legalization, diversification and word-of-mouth. It also provided a strong theoretical foundation for the development and communication of cross-border e-commerce in China. The thesis systematically studied the communication strategies, but did not elaborate the sales methods of cross-border e-commerce.

Yan Yan (2021) focused on the influence of information environment on human behavior and systematically discussed the formation of the phenomenon of "information environmentalization" of live broadcast goods from four parts. From the masses to the public, the way of selling goods from a single to a variety of, from the psychology of consumers, drew the corresponding conclusions; In addition, suggestions on the development of live broadcast delivery are given from the aspects of public consumption behavior, new media and policy support, which provided a good foundation and good suggestions for the standardized development of live broadcast delivery.

Li Wei (2021), through comparative analysis, compared the expansion of the two cross-border e-commerce platforms in China under the promotion of policies and basic advantages of the external environment, and local development became the inevitable trend of long-term development.

Ren & Liao Hui (2021) used SWOT analysis method to explore the internal strengths and weaknesses of Shopee Pinghe in the development process of cross-border e-commerce industry as well as external opportunities and threats, and proposed corresponding development strategies from the perspectives of SO strategy, WO strategy, ST strategy and WT strategy.

Sun Aimin (2021) analyzed the current situation of foreign trade enterprises in the post-epidemic period, analyzed the advantages and disadvantages and summarized the implementation approaches of cross-border live marketing, so as to play a positive role in promoting foreign trade in China's double-cycle strategy.

To sum up, it is found that the research results of cross-border e-commerce, which conclude its definition, business model, logistics, marketing strategy research are rich, have laid a solid foundation for the cross-border business live new pattern research. No matter for the macro study or the case, the related research results have certain practical significance. But on the whole, there are still some shortcomings:

First, the research perspective is limited. 2020 is the first year of cross-border e-commerce live broadcasting. So far, many research papers still focus on business model, logistics and marketing strategy.

The second is the homogenization of the research content. Many research content overlap.

This study tries to make up for the shortcomings of previous studies by scholars, further studies the promotion effect of cross-border e-commerce live broadcasting on China's foreign trade industry by SWOT analysis, and conducts a methodical and systematic analysis, induction and summary of the problems involved. At the same time, Taiwan's export cross-border e-commerce platform Shopee is taken as an example to conduct a case study. In addition, while analyzing the integration mode of cross-border e-commerce and live broadcasting with goods, feasible suggestions are put forward for the operation strategy of export cross-border e-commerce and strive to achieve practical maneuverability.

2. Analysis on Cross-border E-commerce Live Broadcast Industry

2.1. Development Background

In 2007, Taobao set up Taobao Global Shopping, gathering overseas sellers of high-quality goods, truly meeting the desire of consumers to "shop around the world without leaving home". With the development year after year, cross-border e-commerce has entered a relatively mature stage. At the end of 2019, after the outbreak of COVID-19, 76% of consumers in the US quickly abandoned their shopping habits before the outbreak of epidemic and gradually paid more attention to social media platforms, thus giving birth to a new form of e-commerce retail relying on live broadcasting. Compared with older people, young shoppers are more willing to make purchases through social media channels, which is also an important reason for the formation of live broadcasting e-commerce.

2.2. Significance

With the development of the times, in the emergence of Internet celebrity anchors represented by Li Jiaqi, Li Qi, etc., the development of domestic e-commerce has become mature, forming a complete industrial chain route from anchor with goods to the establishment of MCN (An MCN, or Multi-Channel Network is a company or organization that partners with YouTube channels, content creators and rights holders, often to monetize content that isn't monetizable through regular means.) organizations, and live commerce is booming in China. However, in the past few years, in terms of effective information access, there is also a phenomenon that the information carrying rate of traditional graphic e-commerce is very limited by space. However, anchors can introduce the product in detail in a relatively short time by means of oral broadcast, which effectively improves the efficiency of information access and then improves the conversion rate. For cross-border e-commerce, live broadcasting will be more effective. live broadcasting is equivalent to upgrading traditional cross-border e-commerce from two-dimensional to three-dimensional, and the design of anchors can also help improve user stickiness and trust in the process of live broadcasting. Meanwhile, anchors can interact with consumers through comments and bullet screens, timely answer their questions and provide consumers with the consumption experience of "what you see is what you get" as much as possible. Live stream drainage has become a breakthrough for small and medium-sized foreign trade enterprises. Because it can not only bring new channels for merchants to obtain customers online, but also promote the development pace of the whole cross-border e-commerce, so that domestic goods can truly go to the sea digitally.

3. Research Object Selection and Background Information of Shopee

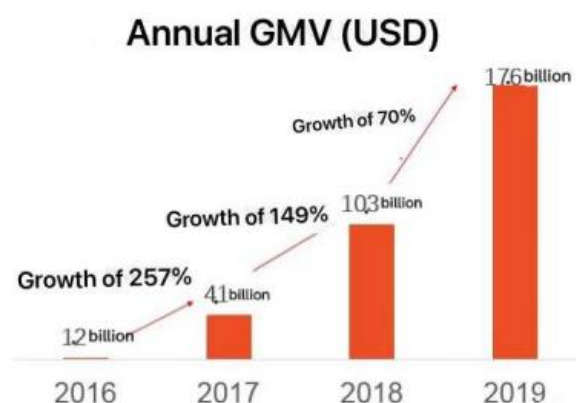
3.1. Research Object Selection -- Case Study on Shopee

Just over a decade ago, four out of five southeast Asians had no Internet connection and limited access. But today, Southeast Asia is the world's most active mobile Internet user. The region has 360 million Internet users, 90 percent of whom access the Internet primarily through mobile phones. Southeast Asia as a whole has a population of about 570 million. Thailand, Vietnam and Singapore are the world's fastest-growing markets. The region's economy has grown by an average of 5 percent a year over the past five years, about 2 percentage points higher than the global average over the past decade. This shows that a stable and fast-growing region is becoming an important economic engine. Southeast Asia is expected to become the world's fourth largest economy by 2030. It also shows the huge market potential in Southeast Asia. (quoted in Zhihu: Shopee Operating Diary)

At the same time, Shopee, which was established in 2015, has successfully stood out among numerous e-commerce platforms. The Shopee platform for southeast Asian market has been gradually promoted by virtue of its strong financial strength and overall e-commerce strategy. Its order volume increased repeatedly and there is an upward trend every year from 2016 to 2019, there is a huge potential in the e-commerce market (See Table 1). Shopee launched live broadcast in the one-month great Shopee promotion activity. The sellers who participated in the live broadcast activity gave positive feedback, and the sales volume achieved a maximum growth of 75%, which made many merchants see the good development prospect of it. Shopee is representative of those who choose high-speed and high-quality development in the field of cross-border live broadcasting. It is hoped that Shopee will bring considerable universal research and provide reference value for the cross-border e-commerce live broadcasting industry with its particularity.

Table 1. The development situation of Shopee from 2016 to 2019

Development Situation of Shopee



Picture source: Zhihu: Shopee Operating Dairy

3.2. Background Information of Shopee in Live Commerce

The cross-border business of Shopee set up in 2016. In just a few years, Shopee developed rapidly in the Southeast Asian market and occupied a larger market share. In 2019, Shopee started a new business activity -- ShopeeLive, which mainly created user flow and brand income through the mode of online celebrities live broadcasting and goods sales. This is very similar to the live broadcast mode of Alibaba's online celebrities. Shopee, which faces Southeast Asia, also

knows that one of the driving forces for the rapid development of e-commerce in Southeast Asia is young consumers in Southeast Asia, and these young consumers are entering the middle class. Cash-rich and young, they have given the model room to grow in Southeast Asia. This kind of young middle class will begin to pursue higher quality brand goods. From the late stage of rapid user growth to the current B2C more standardized user growth model, Shopee's live commerce has achieved good profits. The launch of ShopeeLive caters to sellers' demand for online expansion, and simultaneously maximizes the combination of online celebrity effect and buyers' in-app shopping experience. The purpose is to make the direct broadcast mode penetrate into users' habits and increase users' stickiness to Shopee. (quoted in global.lianlianpay, Aug. 30, 2019)

However, Shopee still has some problems in live commerce, such as the late start of the platform, low level of standardization, supervision and other aspects need to make further adjustments.

4. SWOT Analysis on Live Broadcast of Shopee

4.1. Superiority

(1) Low entry threshold and low operating cost

For cross-border e-commerce enterprises, the number of foreign trade enterprises provides the basic conditions for platform operation. By lowering the entry threshold, Shopee will attract more merchants to join the platform through the entry cost. As long as it meets the entry conditions of Shopee platform, it can be settled successfully, and there is no need to pay deposit or commission after the successful settlement. Sellers can choose native advertising and buy it according to their own wishes. This ensures the number of merchants to a certain extent and brings more choices for customers. In addition, Shopee's ShopeeLive function can help sellers share content with their store fans and potential customers in real time, and sellers can also choose whether to live broadcast or not, and formulate preferential rates for live broadcast, providing a relatively free live broadcast environment for sellers.

(2) High nature of social contact

Shopee is only available on mobile devices, which also provides young people in Southeast Asia with more opportunities to watch live broadcast on mobile devices, greatly increasing the viewing rate of live broadcast. Its strong social features also greatly promote the product conversion rate.

(3) A large fan base and a considerable click-through rate

Because Shopee platform is oriented to the Southeast Asian market, and in the early stage of the investment in a large number of advertising, such as South Korea most popular girl group as the spokesperson; Mass advertising on mobile devices such as subways in Southeast Asian countries is very effective in terms of publicity. In just a few years, the number of Shopee app downloads has skyrocketed to become the fourth most downloaded e-commerce platform (the top three are AliExpress, Amazon, etc.), which has considerable advantages in terms of the number of buyers' fans. A large fan base means higher exposure and click-through rates, helping to boost the effectiveness of livestreams. At the same time, because most of the people in Southeast Asia who surf the Internet by mobile devices are young people, their curiosity and enthusiasm for the Internet accelerate their acceptance of live broadcasting. The strong picture sense and high conversion rate of live broadcasting can attract more potential customers and finally promote the generation of orders.

4.2. Weakness

(1) Single product profit is relatively low, affecting seller income

As Shopee is a newly developed e-commerce platform, the strategy of entering the market is to penetrate at a low price. It is positioned as a platform to store goods with low price and low

volume. Sellers need to rely on order volume to support the quality of the store, but this has also caused many troubles for sellers, and some people even think it is a "losing business". If you want to profit, guest unit price and single volume have to be high.

However, compared with ordinary online sales, live broadcasting requires more manpower and material resources. From the cultivation of live broadcast talents to the selection of shops, which can highlight the advantages of stores according to market demand to meet the needs of more consumers, these aspects all need taking into more consideration. They are certain difficulties so that some sellers choose to retreat.

(2) The live broadcasting mechanism of the platform is not perfect yet

Despite the rapid development of Shopee, the platform is still in the stage of development, and it may take some time to improve the mechanism. After all, any platform needs a development cycle. Since the establishment of the platform in 2015, the rules of the platform have undergone a considerable adjustment process, which makes some sellers who have achieved initial results in operation adjustment have to continue to get familiar with the rules, thus restricting the operation activities of third-party cross-border e-commerce platform stores of enterprises. Such rules are often closely related to sellers' daily operations, and they require a lot of time and effort to study platform rules. All these restrict the survival and development of the platform. In addition, cross-border live broadcasting is not as mature as domestic live broadcasting, and there are still many gaps in many aspects, which also leads to the incomplete industrial chain of Shopee live broadcasting and live commerce, which affects the depth and breadth of current live broadcasting and live commerce to some extent.

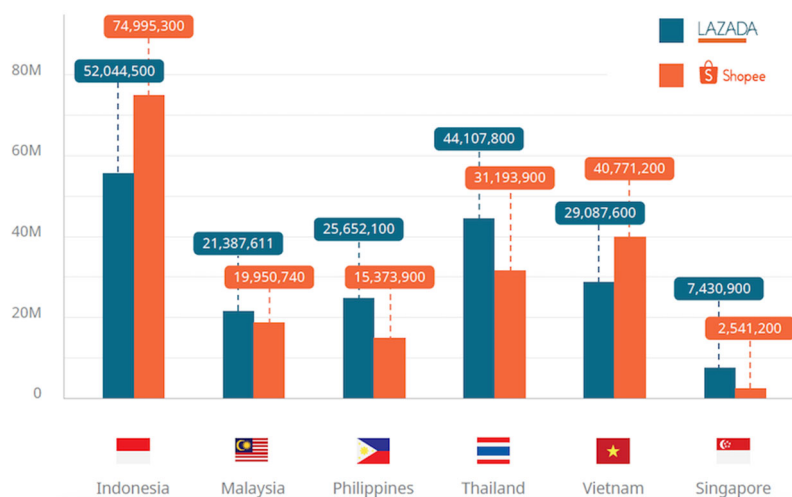
4.3. Opportunity

When internal advantages and external opportunities adapt to each other are consistent, the platform can tap external opportunities by virtue of its own internal advantages, and fully combine external opportunities with internal advantages and give full play to them. With strong financial resources, Shopee can use the financial advantage to expand the seller base of the platform, strengthen the publicity in foreign countries, and attract more high-quality sellers by providing more preferential entry. When the number of sellers tends to increase steadily, by improving the rules of live broadcasting on the platform, more online celebrities from foreign platforms will be attracted to join Shopee live broadcasting, such as Internet celebrities on Twitter and Meta, to attract more live broadcasting traffic, create publicity for Shopee live broadcasting, and develop community fans and potential buyers on the platform.

4.4. Threats

Competition among peers is fierce. The epidemic has brought unprecedented difficulties to offline trade, but with the development of the Internet, online trade has made great progress. Through the "e-commerce + live broadcasting" approach, foreign trade volume has repeatedly reached new highs, breaking the economic ice caused by the epidemic. Cross-border live broadcasting is still a new blue ocean, and many merchants and platforms actively participate in this blue ocean market and use this new marketing method. Therefore, in the process of development, Shopee not only faces threats from mainstream platforms, but also faces competition from other new platforms, such as LAZADA(See Table 2). It should do a good job in the analysis of competitors, make a correct development plan, build core competitiveness, highlight the comparative advantage is particularly important.

Table 2. The comparison in active number of Shopee & Lazada
**The Rivalry of Two Regional E-commerce
 Platforms in Southeast Asia as of Q1 2019**



Picture source: <https://www.campaignasia.com>

5. Strategies to Deal with the Problems of Shopee Live Broadcasting

5.1. Enhance of Live Broadcast Interactivity

If conditions permit, choose multiple live broadcast as far as possible to increase the interaction and interest of the live broadcast room and improve the viewing experience of the audience. Anchors and fans can establish interactive contact. Daily topics, chat and so on are good ways to improve audience experience. Moreover, the timely live broadcast can also make foreign customers have a sense of immersive reality, strengthen customers' immersive experience, and realize the sales growth unconsciously. In addition, since live broadcasting crosses national boundaries, more attention should be paid to the prime time of live broadcasting in foreign countries, avoiding working hours and other hours with less passenger flow as far as possible, so as to reduce the decrease in sales caused by objective reasons.

Small video marketing is also one of the popular marketing means. The high popularity of various small video social platforms reflects people's love for the form of small video. Even in foreign countries, TIKTOK, small video platform, has a large audience, which can bring huge traffic and income. Insert a small video in the live broadcast to show the advantages of the enterprise from the enterprise team, QC (i.e. quality control) process and other aspects. And transnational after-sales service is a difficult point in foreign trade industry. After commodity is sold abroad, product after-sale problem protrudes to show. Communication inconvenience and after-sale point lack, make foreign buyer doubts heavily. Small videos of common after-sales problems can be added in Shopee live broadcast to solve customers' worries and increase customers' purchase rate.

5.2. Localization of Live Broadcast

It is suggested to develop different livestreaming strategies according to market characteristics and realize localized livestreaming operations. Shopee platform is targeted at six southeast Asian countries and Taiwan region of China. Each country and region has its own characteristics in terms of economic development level, customs and habits, and consumption preferences. Since cross-border e-commerce companies are faced with cross-cultural differences and differences in individual needs in the selection of products and the application of live broadcast strategies, they must adjust measures to local conditions in the level of live broadcast and the

subsequent live broadcast operation. Shopee platform should give full consideration to the differences between political and economic environments and cultural environments, cultivate multi-lingual talents for live broadcast sales, and reflect cross-cultural communication and exchange in live broadcast. For example, when facing The Taiwan area of our country, considering the characteristic culture of Southern Fujian, there should be corresponding changes for the selection of products. When facing Indian buyers, they should take into account India's economic situation and some taboo culture, and focus on avoiding corresponding problems in the live broadcast.

5.3. Standardization of Live Broadcast

The supervision of the livestreaming industrial chain with goods should be strengthened. In China, "the female leader in live broadcasting" Viya was fined 1.341 billion yuan for tax evasion, and she was publicly dealt with for her repeated failure to change, which also reflects the problems in China's live broadcasting industry in the conduct of anchors and the lack of supervision of the industry chain. China should introduce relevant laws and regulations to ensure the comprehensive supervision of the livestreaming industry chain, so as to control the standardization of the domestic livestreaming industry. However, the sellers of cross-border platforms come from all over the world, and there is still a questionable attitude towards the standardization of cross-border live broadcasting in its infancy. The state's supervision of e-commerce platforms should also be further strengthened and the auditing mechanism of e-commerce platforms should be standardized. Relevant managers of Shopee platform can timely supervise the non-standard problems in live broadcast, or set up a special supervision group for live broadcast on the platform to regulate the live broadcast mechanism and require merchants to improve the commodity information registration system, so that problems can be traced to the source in time.

5.4. Guide Anchors to Enhance Professional Value and Strengthen Moral Concept

There is no doubt that the live broadcast is a key part of the live broadcast goods, and the charm of the anchor has also become an important factor affecting the sales of the live broadcast products. However, the problems of professional quality and moral concept of the live broadcast still need to be dealt with. On December 21, 2021, Viya was fined 1.341 billion yuan for tax evasion, which caused a great sensation. It also revealed the chaos of the domestic live broadcasting industry, including tax evasion and improper remarks, which had a bad impact on the country and society. This also reminds us that special courses on professional values and ethics should be set up in the talent training of cross-border live broadcasting, and we should be on guard against bad deviations in promoting consumption and value orientation of anchors. While enjoying the dividend of flow, Shopee's live broadcasting platform should also shoulder the social responsibility behind the attention and create a good industry atmosphere.

6. Conclusion

With the continuous development and application of 5G and other technologies, livestreaming and other marketing methods will become important forms of cross-border e-commerce. The combination of the two business models of "cross-border e-commerce + live commerce" has also become a new blue ocean market, injecting fresh blood for the development of China's foreign trade industry in the post-epidemic period.

However, the foothold of e-commerce live broadcast is e-commerce. In the final analysis, e-commerce is ultimately implemented on quality and service. In the author's research, it is found that the current cross-border live broadcast market has problems such as insufficient supervision and weak regulation, which affect its development effect. As an important platform

facing the Southeast Asian market, Shopee has entered the public's field of vision with its own strength. Major e-commerce platforms represented by Shopee should do a good job in cross-border live broadcasting, such as strengthening product quality supervision, strengthening professional training for anchors, and improving platform standardization, localization and interaction.

In this study, the author takes Shopee as an example to study and analyze the transformation of its sales promotion methods in recent years and its development characteristics in the next few years, supplementing the existing research results, and confirming that the new form of cross-border live broadcast has great effects on our country's future economy. However, this study focuses on theoretical research and lacks practical analysis.

While keeping up with the times and the market, we also need to check and fill in the gaps, and strive to achieve long-term high-quality development of cross-border e-commerce platforms with live broadcasting. Maintain the ecological stability of the industry and good social effects.

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