

Article

Analysis of Cross-border E-commerce Marketing Model Innovation in International Trade

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Abstract: Cross-border e-commerce has emerged as a fundamental catalyst for the digital transformation of international trade. In contrast to traditional foreign trade marketing, which relies heavily on physical exhibitions, agents, wholesalers, and conventional off-the-shelf channels, cross-border e-commerce marketing is predominantly driven by digital platforms, social media engagement, content sharing, consumer data analytics, and localized services. Despite the ability of numerous enterprises to rapidly penetrate overseas markets via third-party platforms, they frequently encounter significant challenges, including high platform dependency, limited brand diversity, inadequate data utilization, weak localization, and complex compliance issues. This study systematically addresses the implementation of cross-platform e-commerce marketing models within international trade. By analyzing the intrinsic characteristics of cross-border e-commerce, we propose a comprehensive novel framework comprising platform traffic marketing, social content marketing, data-driven precision marketing, local service marketing, and holistic brand operations. To validate the applied research properties of this framework, four distinct marketing models were trained for simulation: traditional platform marketing, social media marketing, detailed precision marketing, and comprehensive collaborative marketing. Performance was rigorously evaluated using conversion rates, customer acquisition costs, and repurchase metrics. Simulation results demonstrate that the comprehensive collaborative model significantly outperforms traditional platform approaches by maximizing conversion rates, minimizing customer acquisition costs, and substantially increasing user retention. Ultimately, we recommend that cross-border e-commerce enterprises transition from exclusively competing for traffic toward an integrated marketing ecosystem that synergizes platforms, content, data, services, and branding to ensure long-term international competitiveness.

Keywords: cross-border e-commerce; international trade; digital marketing; data-driven marketing; localization services; marketing innovation

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1. Introduction

The rapid development of cross-border e-commerce has significantly transformed the marketing dynamics of international trade. Traditional international trade marketing methods, such as trade shows, local agents, wholesalers, distribution channels, and offline business communication, remain relevant for bulk trade and standardized acquisition [1]. However, these models often face challenges such as lengthy processing chains, inefficient communication, delayed market feedback, and difficulties in gathering customer information. In contrast, cross-border e-commerce platforms, self-service websites, social media, and digital advertising enable businesses to directly engage with overseas customers. These tools facilitate faster processes for displaying products, converting orders, settling payments, fulfilling logistics, and managing after-sales communication, thereby enhancing operational efficiency and customer satisfaction.

Previous studies have demonstrated that digital capabilities, e-marketing tools, and cross-border platforms play a crucial role in shaping the performance of international e-commerce for enterprises. For small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), cross-border

e-commerce has reduced barriers to entering the global market, although marketing remains a complex challenge. Enterprises must navigate platform regulations, advertising bidding, content sharing, cultural differences, overseas logistics, user reviews, and data protection requirements. Digital technology innovation and robust digital capabilities are essential for enterprises aiming to establish a foothold in the global market [2]. These capabilities provide the foundation for businesses to adapt to the evolving demands of international trade and leverage digital tools effectively.

For many businesses, cross-border e-commerce marketing often involves setting up a store on a platform and running advertisements. However, this approach can lead to an over-reliance on platform traffic, which makes companies vulnerable to fluctuations caused by changes in platform search algorithms, bidding costs, and review policies [1]. Additionally, the prevalence of homogenized products, intense price competition, and weak brand identity can undermine a company's competitive edge in the international market. As overseas consumers increasingly prioritize factors such as logistics efficiency, secure payment methods, reliable after-sales services, privacy protection, and brand trust, cross-border e-commerce sales have evolved from simple channel expansion to a more comprehensive approach focused on value communication and relationship management.

Innovation in cross-border e-commerce marketing models extends beyond merely adding new marketing channels; it encompasses the entire global trade marketing process. In this context, cross-border e-commerce marketing innovation is defined as the optimization of overseas market strategies, trust-building, purchase conversion, and customer retention through the integration of digital platforms, consumer data, social media, diverse content formats, localized services, and compliance with regulations. The objectives of this research are to analyze the practical characteristics of cross-border e-commerce marketing models, identify key types of innovations, address major issues in current marketing practices, compare the performance of various marketing models through simulation experiments, and propose optimization strategies for businesses engaged in cross-border e-commerce [3].

2. Current Status of Cross-Border E-Commerce Marketing Models

2.1. The Digital Transformation of International Trade Marketing Channels

Cross-border e-commerce is driving a significant transformation in international trade marketing, shifting the focus from traditional intermediaries to direct online sellers. Historically, exporters relied on foreign trade sellers, importers, wholesalers, or overseas distributors to introduce goods into new markets [4]. This multi-layered process often resulted in substantial information loss between businesses and consumers. However, cross-border e-commerce platforms have streamlined this process by integrating product display, matching, payment processing, fulfillment, logistics tracking, and customer feedback into a single, cohesive online system. These platforms enable businesses to closely monitor and respond to local customer demands, thereby enhancing market efficiency and reducing communication gaps.

This shift in marketing channels has fundamentally altered market behaviors and the allocation of marketing resources. Companies are now required not only to maintain traditional channel relationships but also to master platform-specific algorithms, optimize search rankings, manage bidding strategies, analyze consumer reviews, and produce engaging content. The evolution of cross-border e-commerce marketing reflects the growing influence of digital media environments, platform ecosystems, and consumer behavior patterns. This transformation underscores the need for businesses to adapt to the dynamic interplay between technological advancements and market globalization, ensuring they remain competitive in an increasingly interconnected global economy [5].

2.2. Main Characteristics of Cross-Border E-Commerce Marketing

Cross-border e-commerce marketing is characterized by platformization, data-driven approaches, content creation, and localization. Platformization highlights the influence of platform search rankings, recommendation systems, store ratings, logistics,

and user reviews on product visibility and consumer purchasing decisions. Data-driven strategies leverage persistent recorded behaviors such as browsing, clicking, adding favorites, adding items to the cart, purchasing, reviewing, repeat purchases, and user-specific features to optimize advertising and product development [6]. Content-based methods utilize short videos, live streams, influencer reviews, buyer showcases, and scenario-based displays to provide users with a comprehensive understanding of product features and practical applications, thereby enhancing engagement and trust.

Localization is a critical aspect that differentiates cross-border e-commerce from domestic e-commerce. Countries vary significantly in terms of language, cultural festivals, aesthetic preferences, payment processes, after-sales expectations, and levels of consumer trust. Customers' willingness to engage in cross-border transactions often stems from their acceptance of technology, commitment to the process, and trust in the platform or seller [7]. This underscores the importance of tailoring marketing strategies to the specific needs and expectations of the target market. Companies cannot simply replicate domestic marketing approaches; instead, they must reconstruct content and services to align with the unique cultural and operational dynamics of the international audience.

2.3. Changes in Overseas Consumer Behavior

Other consumers are increasingly making decisions about cross-border shopping in other countries. They evaluate prices and reviews on platforms, compare reviews, and follow recommendations from influencers and social media users [1]. Additionally, they consider factors such as logistics timeliness, return convenience, and security. The quality of logistics services and perceived price fairness play a significant role in shaping consumer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and purchasing intentions. Furthermore, the leniency of cross-border return policies can influence purchase decisions by affecting perceptions of quality and risk. These elements collectively contribute to the overall consumer experience and decision-making process in cross-border e-commerce.

For cross-border e-commerce marketing to achieve a positive progression from "exposure" to "click" and ultimately to "purchase," it is essential to focus on fulfillment, customer experience, and service feedback after purchase. A customer's expectations of a brand are shaped by various factors, including advertisement pages, product detail pages, review pages, logistics performance, after-sales service, and the repurchase experience [3]. To gain a competitive advantage in international markets, enterprises must integrate marketing, operations, and service seamlessly. This holistic approach ensures that all aspects of the customer journey are addressed, fostering trust and loyalty while enhancing the overall brand reputation.

3. Framework for Innovation in Cross-Border E-Commerce Marketing Models

As illustrated in Figure 1, the innovation pipeline of cross-border e-commerce marketing models encompasses several critical components. These include platform traffic marketing, which focuses on optimizing user engagement and conversion rates on digital platforms, and social media and content marketing innovation, which leverages creative strategies to enhance brand visibility. Additionally, data-driven precision marketing innovation plays a pivotal role by utilizing advanced analytics to target specific consumer segments effectively [8]. Finally, localized service marketing innovation or branded full collaborative marketing innovation ensures that services and branding are tailored to meet the unique preferences and cultural nuances of diverse markets.

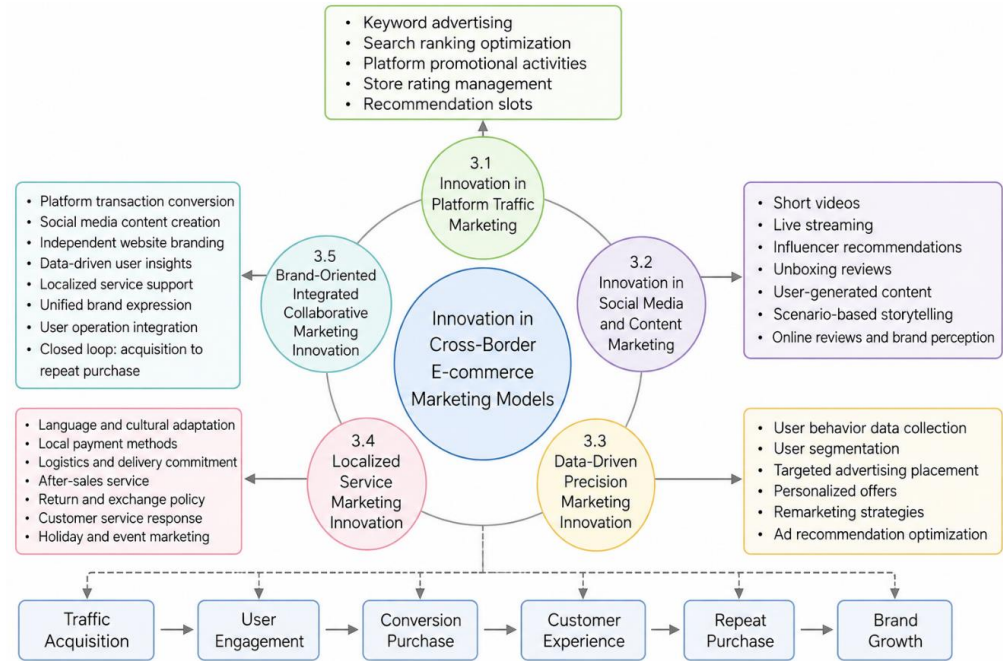


Figure 1. Framework for Innovation in Cross-Border E-commerce Marketing Models

3.1. Platform Traffic Marketing Innovation

Platform traffic marketing represents a fundamental approach for cross-border and cross-domain e-commerce [9]. Businesses utilize strategies such as keyword advertising, search engine optimization, platform promotions, store ratings, and purchase featured placements to generate traffic effectively. This method benefits from a streamlined transaction process, enabling customers to search, compare, order, pay, and review products directly on the platform. For international channel providers, platform marketing serves as a rapid mechanism to assess product demand and market viability, offering valuable insights into consumer preferences and trends. Additionally, the structured nature of platform marketing ensures transparency and ease of use for both businesses and customers, fostering trust and reliability in transactions.

However, platform traffic marketing is not without its challenges [8]. Increased competition often leads to higher advertising costs, raising customer acquisition expenses significantly. Furthermore, platform-specific rules and algorithms can influence product visibility, potentially limiting exposure for certain offerings. Studies on regional competitiveness in cross-border e-commerce have highlighted how platform dynamics and market conditions can shape cross-country e-commerce composition. As such, platform traffic marketing should be regarded as an initial entry point into the market rather than a comprehensive solution for all marketing needs. Enterprises must diversify their marketing strategies to mitigate risks and adapt to evolving platform regulations and competitive landscapes.

3.2. Social Media and Content Marketing Innovation

Social media marketing focuses on the dissemination of content through platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. These platforms enable the use of various media formats, including short videos, live streams, unboxing reviews, influencer collaborations, and user-generated content, to present product features in relatable and practical contexts. Unlike traditional platform advertisements, social content often fosters emotional connections with audiences, making it particularly effective in conveying product attributes and brand values [10]. This approach allows brands to engage with consumers on a deeper level, enhancing their understanding of the product's relevance and appeal.

Content marketing extends beyond merely publishing images or videos; it involves crafting narratives around the practical use cases of target consumers. For instance, home furnishing products can highlight aspects such as aesthetic appeal and storage efficiency, while clothing products may emphasize cultural contexts and styling options. Similarly, electronic products can focus on functional demonstrations and authentic user reviews. Online reviews, in particular, play a pivotal role in shaping consumer perceptions, as they provide insights into the performance and reliability of a brand. This underscores the importance of leveraging content and reviews as foundational elements for building brand recognition and fostering cross-border consumer trust [10].

3.3. Data-Driven Innovation in Precision Marketing

Data-driven precision marketing plays a pivotal role in cross-border e-commerce strategies. Enterprises can segment users based on their interactions, such as browsing, clicking, adding items to the cart, collecting products, purchasing, replenishing stock, and leaving reviews. These behavioral patterns enable the design of targeted advertisements, discounts, and remarketing strategies tailored to specific user needs. The effectiveness of platform-recommended advertisements significantly influences consumer purchasing decisions, highlighting the importance of aligning ad strategies with psychological perceptions to enhance engagement and drive sales.

3.4. Localized Service Marketing Innovation

Localized service marketing involves adapting marketing strategies to align with the cultural and behavioral preferences of the target market [11]. This includes modifications to marketing content, payment systems, logistics protocols, and after-sales services. While translating content into the local language is a fundamental step, effective localization extends further to encompass holiday-specific promotions, culturally appropriate product imagery, sizing standards, customer service responsiveness, and tailored return and exchange policies. Additionally, consumer protection measures play a vital role in fostering trust and loyalty among cross-border e-commerce customers. By addressing these aspects, businesses can create a more personalized and engaging shopping experience, ultimately driving higher conversion rates and repeat purchases.

Localization significantly influences customer trust, particularly for brands that are unfamiliar to the target audience. Customers often lack direct knowledge of a company's reliability, making clear and transparent policies essential. For instance, a well-defined return policy mitigates perceived risks, while consistent delivery times enhance reliability. Furthermore, prompt and accurate responses from customer service teams contribute to overall satisfaction. These elements of localized service are not merely tools for marketing but are integral to building trust and encouraging repeat transactions in the competitive landscape of cross-border e-commerce. By prioritizing these factors, businesses can establish a strong foundation for long-term customer relationships and sustained growth.

3.5. Brand-Oriented Integrated Collaborative Marketing Innovation

Cooperative marketing involves more than merely adding multiple channels; it requires the establishment of a unified brand expression and cohesive user engagement across platforms, social media, independent websites, data systems, and localized services [10]. This approach emphasizes the integration of marketing capabilities with digital tools and activities, ensuring that advertising is not treated as an isolated endeavor but as part of a comprehensive strategy. By aligning these elements, businesses can create a seamless and consistent brand experience that resonates with users across various touchpoints, ultimately enhancing their competitive edge in the market.

Full and collaborative brand marketing encompasses a range of strategies, including leveraging platforms for transaction conversions, utilizing social media for brand seeding, building brand identity through independent websites, employing data systems for user detection and targeted advertising, and fostering trust through localized services. Each stage contributes to guiding the industry toward a unified goal, transitioning from initial traffic generation to fostering repeat purchases [12]. For sustainable growth in

international trade, this holistic approach to marketing reduces dependency on a single platform while gradually building robust brand assets. Such a strategy not only enhances customer loyalty but also ensures long-term resilience in a competitive global marketplace.

4. Major Problems in Current Cross-Border E-Commerce Marketing Innovation

4.1. Excessive Reliance on Third-Party Platforms

Many businesses depend heavily on third-party platforms for their sales operations. This reliance introduces significant risks, as changes in platform traffic, advertising policies, review systems, or rating algorithms can directly impact business performance. Such dependence also limits the ability of companies to retain and manage customer information effectively, as they often have access to only minimal transaction data [11]. This lack of control over customer relationships hinders long-term engagement and loyalty. Furthermore, the competitive nature of these platforms often forces businesses to compete primarily on price, as consumers tend to make purchasing decisions based on cost and short-term reviews. This dynamic can erode profit margins and stifle innovation in product differentiation.

4.2. Insufficient Brand Differentiation

Some cross-border e-commerce companies continue to focus on selling products at low prices to attract orders. While this strategy may yield success during the initial stages of market entry, it often results in diminished profit margins, a weakened brand reputation, and low levels of customer loyalty [8, 10]. The cross-border e-commerce landscape is evolving from a focus on "selling products" to emphasizing "selling brands and services." Companies that fail to establish a distinct brand identity will struggle to maintain a competitive edge in the future. Brand differentiation is demonstrated through elements such as trademarks, packaging design, compelling product narratives, service commitments, content presentation styles, and interactive user engagement. These aspects collectively contribute to building a sustainable and recognizable brand presence in the market.

4.3. Insufficient Localization Capabilities

Inadequate localization primarily leads to mechanical translations, misinterpretations of cultural nuances, incorrect sizing or specifications, delayed customer service, and unfair payment or return and exchange policies. For international customers, such issues significantly heighten perceived risks, particularly for mid-to-high-priced items where reliability and service guarantees are highly valued [4]. Furthermore, inconsistent adaptation of marketing content to specific markets can disrupt traffic patterns, undermining the stability of customer engagement and overall business performance.

4.4. Low Level of Data Application

Although cross-border e-commerce platforms offer extensive data resources, many small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) focus solely on basic metrics such as sales figures, clicks, and advertising expenditure. However, they often neglect more critical indicators like conversion rates, customer lifetime value, repeat purchase behavior, and the marginal returns on advertising investments. This limited approach hampers their ability to make informed marketing decisions, leading to inefficient allocation of advertising budgets and significant fluctuations in marketing performance. To achieve sustainable success, SMEs must adopt comprehensive data-driven strategies that go beyond back-end reporting. This includes systematic data collection, segmentation, strategic planning, and performance analysis to establish a robust closed-loop system for continuous improvement.

4.5. Compliance Risks Are Gradually Increasing.

Cross-border e-commerce faces increasing challenges related to data privacy, advertising practices, intellectual property rights, platform regulations, and consumer grievances. Particularly in the European Union and North American markets, businesses

must adhere to stringent local laws when collecting user data, implementing targeted advertising strategies, evaluating product performance, and resolving disputes during sales transactions [5, 6]. Effective compliance management is essential for successful cross-border marketing operations. Violations of these regulations can result in severe consequences, including restrictions on store operations, removal of advertisements, heightened consumer complaints, and potential legal actions. Companies must prioritize robust compliance frameworks to mitigate these risks and ensure sustainable growth in international markets.

5. Optimization Path of Cross-Border E-Commerce Marketing Model Innovation

5.1. Building a Multi-Channel Collaborative Marketing System

Businesses should diversify their marketing strategies by utilizing multiple platforms and channels, rather than relying solely on a single platform. This approach includes leveraging store-based outlets, independent websites, social media platforms, email marketing campaigns, influencer partnerships, and overseas services. A multi-channel system not only expands the number of touchpoints but also assigns distinct roles to each channel: transactional activities are conducted on platforms, content sharing occurs on social websites, brand building is facilitated through independent sites, and repeat purchases or customer activations are driven by email or membership systems. By distributing these responsibilities across various channels, companies can mitigate their reliance on any single platform, thereby enhancing their resilience and adaptability within the dynamic cross-border e-commerce industry.

5.2. Promoting the Transformation to Brand Marketing

Businesses should transition from a low-price sales strategy to a value-oriented approach that emphasizes quality and differentiation. Effective brand marketing requires a clear understanding of the target market, precise product positioning, appealing design, compelling narratives, and exceptional service. Cross-border e-commerce companies must focus on creating a consistent and reliable brand perception across multiple consumer touchpoints. This approach not only minimizes price competition but also fosters greater consumer trust, encourages repeat purchases, and enhances word-of-mouth referrals, ultimately driving sustainable growth and market stability.

5.3. Enhance Localized Content and Service Design

Localizing your business for diverse markets is essential to achieving global success. This involves adapting product titles, detail pages, advertising copy, video scripts, customer service language, as well as payment and return/exchange policies to align with the cultural and linguistic preferences of the target market. Businesses can also enhance their relevance by designing campaigns that coincide with local holidays and consumer scenarios, such as Black Friday, Christmas, back-to-school periods, or Ramadan. Additionally, creating comprehensive local resource libraries and FAQ repositories can ensure consistency between marketing efforts and customer service interactions, thereby fostering trust and improving customer satisfaction [4].

5.4. Enhance Data-Driven Operational Capabilities

Businesses should establish a comprehensive closed-loop system that integrates information collection with marketing feedback to optimize operational strategies. Initially, it is essential to define key performance indicators (KPIs) such as impressions, click-through rate, conversion rate, average order value, repurchase rate, return rate, and the lifetime value of customers. Subsequently, customer segmentation should be conducted based on behavioral patterns, categorizing them into groups such as new customers, potential future customers, dormant customers, and high-value customers. Tailored advertising, promotional, and content outreach strategies should then be devised for each customer segment. Data-driven operations focus not on creating static models but on continuously monitoring and analyzing data that influences marketing budgets

and user operation decisions. This iterative approach ensures that businesses remain agile and responsive to dynamic market conditions.

5.5. Establish a Compliance-Oriented Marketing Management Mechanism

Cross-border e-commerce companies should integrate compliance review mechanisms into their marketing strategies to ensure that advertising descriptions remain authentic, data privacy is safeguarded, intellectual property risks are mitigated, and user reviews align with platform policy updates. Compliance should not be perceived as a constraint on marketing innovation but rather as a foundational element for sustainable growth and successful entry into international markets. This approach supports regional innovation and sustainable development by fostering a stable institutional framework and adherence to compliance policies. By prioritizing these measures, companies can build trust with global consumers and establish a robust presence in the competitive landscape of digital trade.

6. Discussion

Our analysis demonstrates that cross-border e-commerce marketing models are both systematic and phased, reflecting the dynamic nature of business development. The systematic aspect arises from the interconnectedness of platform, content, data, services, and brands, which collectively form a cohesive marketing loop. These elements are not isolated but work synergistically to enhance marketing effectiveness. The phased aspect highlights the importance of tailoring strategies to the developmental stage of a company [2]. Emerging companies should prioritize platform traffic to ensure product demand and visibility, while more established companies can benefit from fostering content sharing and enhancing local services to deepen consumer engagement. Mature enterprises, on the other hand, are better positioned to focus on building robust brand assets, developing independent websites, and implementing comprehensive global user management systems to sustain long-term growth.

From a trade perspective, cross-border e-commerce marketing has revolutionized traditional business practices, reshaping both customer acquisition strategies and trade organization. Digital platforms now serve as critical tools for businesses to gather market intelligence, refine products based on consumer feedback, and elevate brand awareness through social media channels. Additionally, data systems enable businesses to optimize inventory management and advertising budgets, ensuring operational efficiency. The locus of market interference has shifted significantly, moving away from traditional channel relationships toward the utilization of consumer data and digital services. This transformation underscores the growing importance of technology-driven approaches in modern trade dynamics.

Despite its contributions, this paper acknowledges certain limitations [4, 8]. The simulation experiments conducted rely on reasonable assumptions and are primarily intended to illustrate relative trends in marketing models rather than serve as substitutes for real-world enterprise data. Future research should aim to collect comprehensive datasets, including platform transaction records, advertising metrics, consumer survey responses, and insights from enterprise interviews. Employing advanced analytical methods such as structural equation modeling, panel regression, or machine learning could provide deeper insights into the impact of marketing innovations on sales performance and customer loyalty. Such approaches would enhance the robustness of findings and offer actionable recommendations for businesses navigating the evolving landscape of cross-border e-commerce.

7. Conclusion

Cross-border e-commerce has fundamentally transformed the global trade marketing landscape, shifting from traditional channel-based approaches to a more integrated and collaborative marketing paradigm. This evolution incorporates key elements such as digitalization, social media engagement, data analytics, localization

strategies, and branding initiatives. In this study, a comprehensive framework for cross-border marketing was developed and applied to compare four distinct global marketing models: traditional platform marketing, social media marketing, data-driven marketing, and full collaborative marketing. Through detailed simulations, the findings reveal that adopting a full collaborative marketing approach leads to substantial improvements in conversion rates and significantly reduces customer acquisition costs. These results underscore the importance of leveraging interconnected strategies to optimize performance in the competitive global marketplace.

Therefore, cross-border e-commerce firms are advised to avoid over-reliance on a single platform or engaging in unsustainable low-price competition. Instead, they should focus on enhancing their international market competitiveness through multi-channel cooperation, robust brand expression, localized service offerings, data-driven operational strategies, and stringent compliance management. This study provides actionable insights for practitioners by demonstrating a logical progression from problem identification to model development, simulation-based validation, and practical management recommendations. Future research could explore the integration of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and blockchain, to further enhance the efficiency and security of cross-border e-commerce operations. Additionally, examining the long-term impacts of collaborative marketing on customer loyalty and market share could provide valuable perspectives for sustained growth in this dynamic sector.

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