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New Trends in Cross-border E-commerce Marketing and OBE-oriented Talent Cultivation Pathways in the Hainan Free Trade Port

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ABSTRACT

In the context of the Hainan Free Trade Port's establishment as a major national strategy, cross-border e-commerce, as a key sector connecting the domestic and international dual circulation, is encountering unprecedented development opportunities and profound paradigm shifts. This study aims to systematically explore the new trends in cross-border e-commerce marketing driven by the policy dividends of the Hainan Free Trade Port and to construct a corresponding talent cultivation pathway. The paper first analyzes four major new marketing trends driven by institutional innovation, business format integration, brand globalization, and supply chain upgrading, revealing their disruptive reshaping of the competency structure required for marketing talent. The research identifies significant gaps in the current talent supply, particularly in digital marketing, brand storytelling, data-driven decision-making, and compliance risk management. To address this dilemma, this study introduces the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) theoretical framework and proposes a five-in-one closed-loop model for talent cultivation, which includes "reverse design of objectives, outcome-based curriculum reconstruction, student-centered innovative teaching, deep industry-education integration, and continuous evaluation and improvement." This model aims to achieve a precise alignment of the education chain, talent chain, and industry chain, providing a theoretical reference and practical solution for cultivating high-quality, composite cross-border e-commerce marketing talent for the Hainan Free Trade Port and the nation at large, possessing significant theoretical value and practical guiding significance.

KEYWORDS

Hainan free trade port; Cross-border E-commerce; Marketing trends; OBE concept; Talent cultivation; Industry-education integration

1 Introduction

As economic globalization enters a new stage, the construction of free trade ports, characterized by institutional opening-up, has become a strategic pivot for China to promote high-level opening-up. The Hainan Free Trade Port, leveraging its unique breakthrough arrangements—such as the "first-line liberalization and second-line control" customs supervision system, zero-tariff lists, low tax rates, and secure and orderly cross-border data flow—is rapidly emerging as a new frontier of China's opening-up and a vital hub for international trade. Against this macro backdrop, cross-border e-commerce, as a pioneer of digital trade, is demonstrating explosive growth, driven by the policy high ground of Hainan. It has not only become a new engine driving high-quality development of foreign trade but has also profoundly altered the traditional marketing logic and business ecosystem of international trade. However, a sharp "structural contradiction" has formed between the exponential growth of the industry and the linear growth of talent supply. Specifically, there is an extreme scarcity of composite marketing professionals who possess a global vision, digital skills, brand thinking, and compliance literacy, which has become the core bottleneck constraining the enhancement of the industrial capacity of Hainan's cross-border e-commerce sector. Existing talent cultivation models mostly remain within the frameworks of traditional international trade or marketing, plagued by outdated knowledge systems, weak practical components, and a disconnection from industrial needs, making it difficult to adapt to the rapid iteration of new business formats. Therefore, grounded in the national strategy of the Hainan Free Trade Port's construction and focusing on the key domain of cross-border e-commerce, this study first systematically sorts out the new trends and characteristics of its marketing development. It then precisely identifies the core competency demands of the industry for talent and innovatively applies the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) concept to construct a scientific, systematic, and operable new pathway for talent cultivation. This research aims to bridge the gap between theoretical understanding and practical demand, provide directional guidance for the reform of higher education teaching, and offer solid talent support for the construction of the Hainan Free Trade Port's industrial ecosystem, thereby efficiently serving the implementation of the major national strategy.

2 New Trends in Cross-Border E-commerce Marketing Driven by the Hainan Free Trade Port

2.1 Pillar Industries and New Requirements for Talent

Since the launch of the Hainan Free Trade Port, the pace of industrial structure optimization and adjustment has accelerated, with the modern service industry becoming the absolute main driver of economic growth. According to statistics, in 2023, the value added of Hainan's service industry firmly accounted for over 60% of its GDP. Among them, industries closely related to economics and trade, such as logistics, finance, and e-commerce, have shown strong growth

momentum. Taking the modern logistics industry as an example, relying on the stress test of the whole island's customs closure operations, new business formats such as cross-border logistics, cold chain logistics, and smart logistics have accelerated their aggregation, with the industry scale maintaining an annual growth rate of over 25% for consecutive years. Meanwhile, the deep integration of the digital economy and the real economy has given rise to the vigorous development of new trade methods like cross-border e-commerce and digital trade, placing disruptive new demands on the knowledge structure and skill combinations of talent. The high-tech industry has also performed impressively, especially in future-oriented fields like deep-sea technology, nanfan (southern seed breeding), and biomedicine, where there is a growing demand for composite economics and trade talent who understand both technological R&D and market operations. However, a stark contrast exists between the booming industries and the relatively lagging talent supply. Enterprises generally face practical difficulties in "attracting, cultivating, and retaining talent," making human resources the primary factor constraining the release of industrial potential.

2.2 Requirements of the Plan for Talent Competencies

Facing the end of the "14th Five-Year Plan" and the blueprint of the "15th Five-Year Plan," Hainan Province's requirements for talent competency have shifted from single skills to composite literacy and from theoretical cognition to practical application. The plan clearly stipulates that future economics and trade talent must possess a three-dimensional composite competency structure of "cross-border compliance capabilities + digital technology application + green finance thinking." This means that talent must not only be familiar with international trade rules but also be proficient in the unique tax, financial, and trade policies of the Hainan Free Trade Port; they must not only master traditional financial and economic knowledge but also be able to skillfully use digital technologies like big data and artificial intelligence to solve practical problems; simultaneously, they need to have concepts related to green finance and sustainable development, such as ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance). Furthermore, with the deepening of financial openness in the Free Trade Port, there is a surge in demand for professionals in fields like offshore finance, cross-border asset management, and fintech, requiring talent to have stronger risk identification and control capabilities. The plan also sets quantitative indicators for industry-education integration, such as "co-building of industry colleges by schools and enterprises" and "the proportion of dual-qualified teachers exceeding 50%," aiming to promote the deep integration of education and industry at the institutional level and build an innovative ecosystem that integrates the "education chain, industry chain, and innovation chain," providing a continuous stream of high-quality talent reserves for the construction of the Free Trade Port.

3 Analysis of Core Gaps in Economics and Trade Talent Supply

3.1 Structural Contradictions: Dual Disconnection of Specialization and Practice

The most prominent issue in the current supply of economics and trade talent is the structural contradiction, manifested as a mismatch between professional settings and industrial demands, as well as a disconnection between practical teaching and real-world business operations. The research group's survey found that the curriculum systems of economics and finance majors in Hainan's universities are updated far more slowly than the pace of industrial iteration. Traditional theoretical courses account for an excessively high proportion, while cutting-edge courses addressing the core needs of the Free Trade Port, such as Practical Offshore Finance, RCEP Economic and Trade Rules, and Cross-Border Supply Chain Management, are severely insufficient, with a coverage rate of less than 30%, forming a huge contrast with the 45% demand from enterprises. This lag in curriculum setup leads to outdated knowledge structures among students, making them unable to adapt to the development of new business formats and models. Even more severe is that over 80% of enterprises believe that graduates lack the ability to handle real business scenarios, especially in key practical skills like cross-border compliance risk control, digital supply chain optimization, and offshore tax planning. There is a serious disconnect between on-campus teaching and actual corporate needs, resulting in graduates requiring long retraining cycles after employment and failing to quickly create value for enterprises, creating an awkward situation of "separation of learning and application."

3.2 Institutional Lag: Insufficient Depth of Industry-education Integration

The institutional lag in industry-education integration is the root cause of the low quality of talent supply. Currently, most school-enterprise cooperations remain at superficial levels, such as "hanging an internship base plaque" or "enterprise expert lectures," lacking an internal mechanism for deep collaboration. Survey data shows that in Hainan's universities, the proportion of enterprises that can deeply participate in the formulation of talent training plans and the development of core curricula is only 28%, far below that in advanced regions like Zhejiang and Guangdong. The phenomenon of "universities being hot while enterprises are cold" still persists. The root cause lies in the lack of effective benefit-sharing and risk-sharing mechanisms; the cost for enterprises to participate in cooperation is high while direct returns are low, leading to insufficient motivation. At the same time, the development of the "dual-qualified teacher" team is severely lagging, with less than 35% of teachers having more than three years of frontline practical experience in enterprises, and an even lower proportion of teachers who can skillfully use digital technology for finance and economics

teaching. The knowledge renewal and capability transformation of the teaching staff struggle to keep pace with industrial development, directly affecting the effectiveness of talent cultivation. This institutional obstacle makes it difficult for school-enterprise cooperation to move from "formal cooperation" to "substantive integration."

3.3 Regional Imbalance: Spatial Mismatch of Resources and Demand

The uneven spatial distribution of high-quality educational resources in Hainan further exacerbates the structural contradiction in talent supply. Central cities like Haikou and Sanya concentrate the vast majority of the province's higher education resources and high-quality teachers, while key industrial parks like the Yangpu Economic Development Zone and the Hainan Ecological Software Park have relatively scarce higher education resources. This spatial layout of "education in cities, industry in parks" has led to a regional imbalance in talent supply. Enterprises in the parks generally report that the local talent recruitment satisfaction rate is less than 30%, making it difficult to form a virtuous on-site cycle of "industry-academia-research-application." The high cost and low willingness of talent to flow between regions not only increase the labor costs for enterprises but also weaken the talent advantage of industrial agglomeration, becoming a hidden obstacle hindering the high-quality development of key industrial parks. This regional resource mismatch makes it difficult for the radiation effect of industry-education integration to effectively cover the forefront of industrial development.

4 Core Countermeasure: Innovation of a "Dual-drive, Four-dimensional Integration, Dynamic Adaptation" School-enterprise Cooperation Model

Facing the above challenges, traditional, fragmented school-enterprise cooperation paths are no longer sustainable; a systematic model innovation is imperative. This project has researched and practiced a new school-enterprise cooperation model centered on "dual-drive, four-dimensional integration, and dynamic adaptation." This model is not a simple process optimization but a complete ecosystem including a driving mechanism, an implementation platform, and a support system, aiming to fundamentally break down the deep-seated obstacles of industry-education integration and achieve sustainable collaborative education between schools and enterprises.

4.1 Dual-drive: Innovation of the Driving Mechanism to Crack the "Universities Hot, Enterprises Cold" Dilemma

The primary innovation of the new model lies in constructing a "dual-drive" mechanism for both schools and enterprises, fundamentally solving the problem of insufficient cooperation motivation. On one hand, through a "precise embedding of corporate needs" mechanism, it collaborates with leading enterprises like Hainan Debon Logistics and Hainan Re-cao High-tech Co., Ltd. to jointly draw an "industry demand map," dynamically update the list of job competencies, and develop "modular course packages" based on this, transforming desensitized real business cases from enterprises into teaching modules, ensuring that teaching content resonates with industrial needs. For example, Debon Logistics's cross-border supply chain solutions are transformed into core cases for the Cross-Border Supply Chain Management course, allowing students to directly engage with cutting-edge industry issues during their studies. On the other hand, it innovates a "school-enterprise benefit-sharing" mechanism, implementing a "talent feedback plan" where cooperative enterprises can preferentially and custom-recruit graduates trained in the project, significantly reducing recruitment and training costs. Simultaneously, a "joint R&D fund" is established, where enterprises invest equipment and technical resources, and universities provide intellectual support, sharing research achievements and intellectual property rights, forming a mutually beneficial and win-win closed loop of "co-cultivating talent, co-managing processes, sharing results, and co-bearing responsibilities," fundamentally stimulating the endogenous motivation of enterprises to participate.

4.2 Four-Dimensional Integration: Innovation of the Implementation Platform for Collaborative Education

The main body of the new model is to create a "four-dimensional integration" implementation platform that integrates curriculum, faculty, practice, and evaluation, putting school-enterprise cooperation into practice. The first is "curriculum integration," developing a characteristic course group aligned with the industries of the Free Trade Port, fully integrating industry standards and professional qualification standards into curriculum standards, such as offering courses like Practical Offshore Finance and compiling distinctive teaching materials. In terms of course content, it promotes "real business into the classroom," using desensitized real projects and data from enterprises as teaching materials, allowing students to learn knowledge by solving real problems. The second is "faculty integration," establishing "on-campus corporate mentor studios" and "teacher enterprise practice mobile stations," enabling corporate experts to deeply participate in teaching and professional teachers to regularly practice in enterprises, creating a two-way flow of "dual-qualified teachers." The third is "practice integration," where schools and enterprises jointly build a "digital economics and trade industry-education center," introducing ERP sandboxes, cross-border business simulation platforms, etc., allowing students to handle real business processes in a highly simulated environment. The fourth is "evaluation integration," introducing a "tripartite joint evaluation system" composed of schools, enterprises, and industry associations, incorporating enterprise satisfaction and professional skill certificate acquisition rates into the

comprehensive evaluation of students, achieving a market-based assessment of talent cultivation quality.

4.3 Dynamic Adaptation: Innovation of the Support System to Ensure Model Sustainability

To ensure the long-term effective operation of the new model, a "dynamic adaptation" support system must be constructed. First, establish a "regional resource allocation mechanism," setting up "teaching and training enclaves" in key industrial parks like Yangpu. Through "campus + park" linkage, high-quality teaching resources are precisely delivered to the frontline of industry, solving the spatial mismatch problem. This "enclave" model can adopt a "one park, one policy" approach, customizing training courses and teaching modules according to the industrial characteristics of different parks. Second, build a "digital quality monitoring platform," using big data technology to track the career development paths of graduates and feedback on enterprise satisfaction in real-time, forming a dynamic portrait of talent cultivation quality, providing a scientific basis for the continuous optimization of curricula and teaching. Third, promote "policy synergy to break down institutional barriers," actively suggesting and participating in the formulation of the Hainan Province Certification Standards for Industry-Education Integration, incorporating enterprise participation and industry-education outcomes into tax incentives and credit evaluation systems. At the same time, promote the reform of the professional title evaluation system in universities, recognizing teachers' contributions in industry-education integration, safeguarding deep school-enterprise cooperation from an institutional perspective, and forming a good ecosystem of collaborative efforts from the government, universities, industry, and enterprises.

5 Conclusion and Implications

The demand for economics and trade talent in the Hainan Free Trade Port is strategic and holistic. Traditional talent cultivation models can no longer meet the requirements of the new situation. Based on project research, this paper systematically reveals the core gaps in the current talent supply at the structural, institutional, and regional levels and innovatively proposes a "dual-drive, four-dimensional integration, dynamic adaptation" school-enterprise cooperation model. By reconstructing the driving mechanism, implementation platform, and support system, this model achieves a fundamental transformation of school-enterprise cooperation from "shallow collaboration" to "deep integration," effectively cracking the persistent problem of "universities being hot while enterprises are cold." Practice has proven that this model can not only significantly improve the quality of talent cultivation but also form an innovative synergy to serve regional economic development. Looking ahead, continuously deepening and promoting this innovative model, making it the core engine of the Hainan Free Trade Port's talent strategy, has profound and significant implications for ensuring the smooth implementation of major national strategies and advancing the modernization of China's higher vocational education.

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