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AI-Empowered Cross-Border E-Commerce Brand Globalization: Mechanisms and Strategic Countermeasures for Suzhou's Textile and Garment Industry

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Abstract: *Suzhou textile and garment industry has a solid foundation, and cross-border e-commerce has developed rapidly. However, most enterprises rely on OEM, the international influence of their own brands is weak, AI applications are scattered, and the integration of design, marketing, operation and service has not been formed, which restricts the transformation from "manufacturing going global " to " brand globalization". AI provides new possibilities in trend insight, user portrait, personality recommendation, intelligent customer service and so on. This paper examines the mechanism and countermeasures of AI enabling brand globalization from four aspects: design and development, brand marketing, operation management and customer service. The research finds that AI drives the transformation through efficiency improvement and capability reshaping in each link of the value chain, which needs to be systematically promoted from five aspects: full-link technology landing, flexible supply chain and compliance risk control, brand operation and consumer service, data talent supply and policy coordination. The research provides decision-making reference for traditional industries in Suzhou and similar cities to leverage AI for brand globalization via cross-border e-commerce.*

Keywords: *Artificial intelligence; Cross-border e-commerce; Textile and garment industry; Brand globalization*

1. Introduction

Since the reform and opening up, China's textile and garment industry has relied on labor cost advantages to cut into the global division of labor system in the form of processing trade, and has become the world 's largest textile exporter since 1994. However, in the ' captured ' global value chain division of labor dominated by multinational buyers, domestic enterprises have long been locked in low value-added processing and manufacturing links, and high value-added links such as brand and design have been absent for a long time. The OEM model constitutes a structural obstacle to industrial transformation and upgrading. At the same time, rising labor costs and increased competition in international trade have formed a double squeeze, and the unsustainability of the traditional model has become increasingly prominent. The rapid rise of cross-border e-commerce has opened up a new channel for industrial breakthrough. This format has evolved from a new format of foreign trade to a new normal of foreign trade. The export pattern is shifting from product trade to brand globalization. In 2025, China 's cross-border e-commerce import and export scale reached 2.84 trillion yuan, accounting for 6.2% of the total import and export value of goods trade in the same period [1]. Cross-border e-commerce brands have long been constrained by insufficient brand operation capabilities, lack of deep insight into overseas markets, and high compliance costs, and the transformation process is slow. The application of artificial intelligence technology in consumption trend insight, user portrait construction, personalized recommendation, intelligent customer service and other links is gradually reshaping the operation mode of cross-border e-commerce. As the ' fourth city ' of foreign trade, Suzhou 's total import and export volume will reach 2.81 trillion yuan in 2025 [2], and the output value of the textile and garment industry will reach 286.15 billion yuan [3]. However, the proportion of cross-border e-commerce is far lower than that of Guangzhou, Hangzhou and other cities. Most enterprises are still mainly OEM, and the application of artificial intelligence mostly stays at a single point of attempt, and has not yet achieved full-link integration. The Suzhou municipal government has issued a " three-year action plan for the high-quality development of the China (Suzhou) cross-border e-commerce comprehensive pilot area (2024-2026)

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" and proposed that by 2026, the import and export volume of cross-border e-commerce will reach 150 billion yuan, and the number of private brands will reach 10,000 [4]. How to rely on artificial intelligence to promote the transformation of Suzhou textile and garment industry from "manufacturing going global" to "brand globalization" has become a pressing issue to be addressed.

Focusing on cross-border e-commerce brands, existing research has accumulated rich results from different perspectives. At the level of industrial chain, Qi Weiwei put forward development suggestions such as strengthening industrial chain coordination and improving supporting services [5]. At the level of evolution path, Yu Juping pays attention to the constraints of brand building and supply chain level on the development of cross-border e-commerce [6]. At the level of enterprise strategy, Su Mengying took SHEIN as a case to examine the sea path of fashion clothing brands [7]. Shen Lvping empirically found that brand alliance strategy can improve customer engagement[8]. Hou Xi analyzes the policy opportunities for cross-border e-commerce brand globalization from the RCEP framework [9]. In terms of the integration of artificial intelligence and cross-border e-commerce, Meng Tao constructed a high-quality development framework for cross-border e-commerce from the dimensions of digital technology empowerment and digital brand ecology [10]; huang Zixuan et al. combed the mechanism of artificial intelligence in supply chain collaboration, demand forecasting, personalized recommendation and cross-border operation support [11]. There are two shortcomings in the current research : one is that the research on brand globalization ignores the empowerment of AI system, and the other is that the research on the integration of AI and cross-border e-commerce lacks the perspective of industrial belt. In view of this gap, this paper takes Suzhou textile and garment industry as the object, focuses on the enabling mechanism of AI in R&D, marketing, operation, service and other links, and explores its brand globalization transformation countermeasures.

1.1. Current Development of CBEC Brand Globalization in Suzhou's Textile Sector

The output value of Suzhou textile and garment industry in 2025 will reach 286.15 billion yuan. From chemical fiber to garment processing, the whole chain is still dominated by manufacturing industry, which is at the middle and low end of the global value chain. In the CBEC, the city 's total CBEC in 2024 was 23.23 billion yuan, an increase of 86.3% year-on-year, reaching 23.38 billion yuan in the first half of 2025 alone. However, its CBEC share is still far behind Guangzhou and Hangzhou, and the cluster advantage has not yet been transformed into competitiveness. In terms of brand export, the private brand rate in 2025 reached 29.7%, an increase of 2.9 percentage points over the previous year. However, most enterprises still rely on OEM production, and the influence of international brands is limited. Brand globalization is in its infancy and lacks policy objectives. Although the guidelines for supporting brand globalization in 2025 provide a clear direction for the industry to shift from manufacturing-driven to brand-driven exports, they do not directly address the current lack of specific policy objectives.

1.2. Current Application of AI in Textile CBEC

At present, artificial intelligence is gradually penetrating into all business links of textile and garment cross-border e-commerce. At the design end, the artificial intelligence-assisted design tool can quickly generate a variety of clothing styles based on inspiration maps or style labels, and simultaneously complete fabric matching and virtual try-on. The artificial intelligence design platform can optimize the cost of the design process by 60%. The platform can adjust colors and patterns with one click and automatically generate a dynamic upper-body effect video, thereby significantly improving product development efficiency. On the marketing side, artificial intelligence-driven digital live broadcast, online virtual exhibition hall and intelligent customer service system have been put into application one after another. Artificial intelligence digital people can realize round-the-clock live broadcast. Multilingual artificial intelligence anchors can adapt to the language and cultural preferences of different target markets, and reduce the content production and labor costs of brand globalization. At the supply chain end, artificial intelligence conducts demand forecasting based on multi-dimensional indicators such as historical sales data, market heat and popular trends, and guides production stocking and inventory optimization. The ' small single quick reaction ' model supported by artificial intelligence realizes on-demand production through the closed-loop of ' small batch trial production-data verification-best-seller replication '. Some enterprises have compressed the batch of single orders from thousands to hundreds, the inventory turnover rate has been significantly improved, and the response speed of the supply chain has been greatly improved.

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1.3. Challenges Facing CBEC Brand Globalization in Suzhou's Textile Sector

Although the coupling of cross-border e-commerce and industrial clusters can form a significant synergistic effect in theory, and subject to the long-term path dependence of Suzhou textile and garment industry, the transformation from "manufacturing going global " to " brand globalization " still faces multiple structural obstacles. At the brand capacity level, enterprises are mostly OEM/ODM-based, and the long-term OEM model has solidified the inertial thinking of ' order production, on-demand processing '. Brand positioning, market promotion, consumer operations and other capacity reserves are insufficient. In 2024, Suzhou 's independent brand products exported within the territory accounted for only 15.7% of the total export value, and most small and medium-sized enterprise brand building is still in its infancy. At the technical application level, although artificial intelligence has made some progress, it is still mainly based on the exploratory application of a single scene. It has not yet formed a systematic integration covering design, marketing, operation, service and other links. Most small and medium-sized enterprises lack AI infrastructure and algorithmic capabilities. The phenomenon of data islands is widespread, and the substantive support of technology applications for brand globalization has not yet been fully released. At the policy supply level, cross-border e-commerce involves multiple departments such as commerce, customs, taxation, and foreign exchange. The policy chain is long. Suzhou has problems such as insufficient supply of service providers and lagging development of industrial chain support. There is a clear shortage of service-oriented enterprises in key links such as comprehensive platforms, international logistics, and brand promotion. The advantages of export-oriented economy have not yet been effectively transformed into the development momentum of cross-border e-commerce.

The above three gaps do not exist in isolation, but reinforce each other through a reverse causal chain: the weak brand ability inhibits the willingness and digestion ability of enterprises to invest in AI technology, the lag of technology application further restricts the efficiency of brand operation and the speed of market response, and the fragmentation of policy supply is difficult to bridge the gap between the former two. The triple gap suppresses the industrial transformation in a low-level equilibrium state, which constitutes a deep obstacle that the brand is difficult to break through. Specifically, as shown in Figure 1:

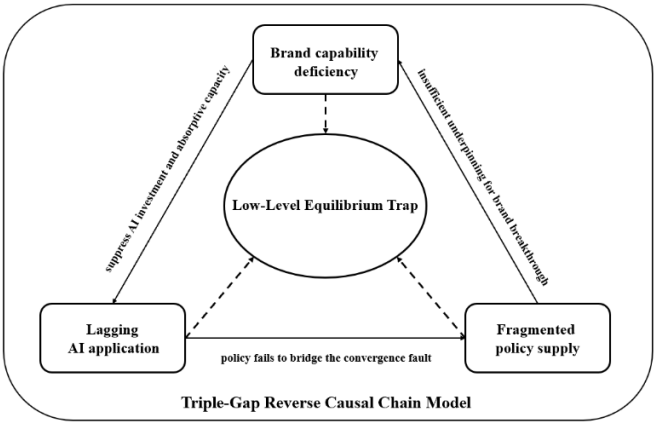

Figure 1: Triple-Gap Reverse Causal Chain Model.

2. Mechanisms of AI-Empowered CBEC Brand Globalization in Suzhou's Textile Sector

2.1. Framework for AI-Empowered CBEC Brand Globalization

Artificial intelligence empowers the globalization of cross-border e-commerce brands, which is manifested in the efficiency improvement and capacity reshaping of each link in the value chain. Focusing on Suzhou textile and garment industry going global, AI empowerment scene covers four links: design and development, brand marketing, operation management and customer service, which runs through product development to customer maintenance. The design end assists fabric planning and sample clothing development to improve creative efficiency; the marketing side strengthens overseas customer acquisition by means of user portrait and precise touch; the operation side optimizes inventory turnover through demand forecasting and supply chain collaboration. The service side relies on multilingual intelligent response to reduce cross-border costs and improve the experience. AI empowerment is not a partial improvement, but a full-link remodeling along the value chain system

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integration, as shown in Figure 2. Although the effectiveness of AI in each link has begun to show, it is subject to data barriers and capacity gaps overall. The following will examine the mechanism of each link and discuss from fragmentation to system integration.

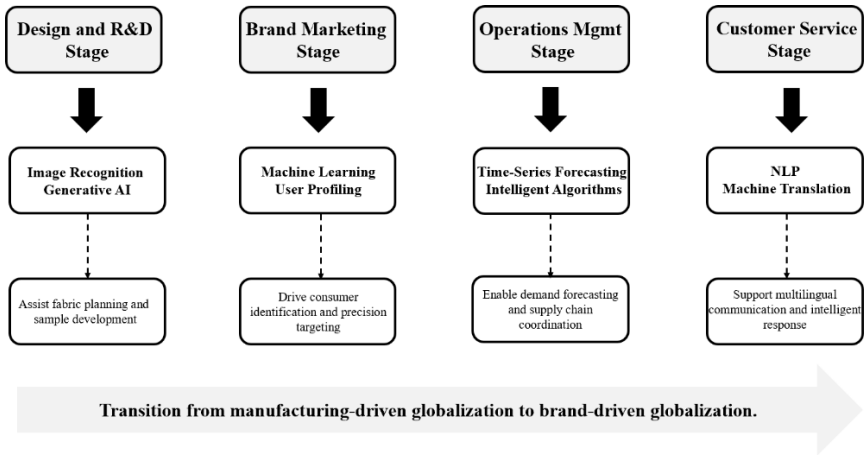

Figure 2: Whole-Chain AI Empowerment for Brand Globalization: A Four-Stage Overview.

2.2. Design and R&D: AI-Assisted Fabric Planning and Sample Development

Design and development is an early and effective part of AI intervention. With the help of image recognition and generative design technology, AI reconstructs the traditional process from three aspects : fabric planning, through the intelligent recognition and generation of massive style and pattern databases, assisting in the rapid completion of fabric matching and pattern design, the design efficiency is improved by 30 times, and the drawing cost is reduced by more than 50%. In the process of style change, the input of inspiration keywords can trigger AI to quickly generate a variety of solutions and iterate ; in the development of sample clothes, 3D virtual simulation transforms the two-dimensional design draft into digital sample clothes, and the loss of physical proofing is reduced by about 70%, which greatly reduces the design threshold. In Suzhou practice, Bosideng 's ' BSD.AI Aesthetic Brain ' achieved full-link connection, the sample development cycle was reduced from 100 days to 27 days, and the cost was reduced by more than 60%. Shenghong also built a digital model of dye color matching. In general, image recognition and generative design have expanded from single-point tools to full-chain support, effectively shortening the development cycle and reducing the design threshold.

2.3. Brand Marketing: AI-Driven User Profiling and Precision Targeting

Brand marketing is the core link for cross-border e-commerce brand globalization. Under the traditional mode, overseas marketing relies on offline exhibitions and platform advertisements, lacks systematic cognition of consumers, and has low efficiency in content production and delivery. AI is changing this pattern from three aspects : grasping multi-platform user data in real time based on machine learning, accurately identifying different market consumption preferences, constructing multi-dimensional user portraits, promoting marketing from empirical judgment to data insight, and achieving accurate identification and efficient reach of consumers ; relying on the portrait-driven recommendation system to push matching products in a timely manner, combined with predictive customer analysis to lock in high-potential customers and improve conversion rates ; with the help of AIGC technology, the threshold and cost of content production are greatly reduced, and marketing materials suitable for multiple platforms are efficiently generated. In the practice of Suzhou, Changshu clothing industry has relied on AIGC to layout content marketing, build digital room and content factory, and realize mass production of ' content seeding ' content. Overall, AI is driving the overseas marketing of Suzhou textile and garment industry from " experience-driven " to " data intelligence-driven " from three aspects : user insight, precise touch and content production.

2.4. Operations Management: AI-Enabled Demand Forecasting and Supply Chain Coordination

Operation management is the back-end guarantee for brand globalization, which determines inventory turnover and market response speed. Under the traditional model, the supply chain relies on manual experience, and problems such as inaccurate demand forecasting and inventory backlog are

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prominent, making it difficult to support agile demand. AI is reconstructing the operation system from two aspects : demand forecasting and supply chain collaboration. Based on time series prediction and intelligent algorithm, AI integrates multi-dimensional data such as historical sales, market heat and popular trends to make accurate predictions, guide production and stocking, and significantly reduce the risk of unsalable and out of stock. At the same time, the data barriers of procurement, production, warehousing, sales and other links are opened up, and the flexible production line is adapted to the needs of small batch, multi-variety and fast delivery. Intelligent warehousing realizes the whole process automation, effectively reduces the inventory cost and improves the turnover efficiency. In the practice of Suzhou, Bosideng built an integrated AI solution, which led to the digital transformation of more than 200 suppliers, the inventory turnover rate increased by 30%, and the frequency of replenishment in peak season exceeded 8 times. Shengze 's ' AI + Textile Big Model ' and Taihu Snow Industry Internet Platform also realize intelligent prediction extension. Overall, AI is promoting the transformation of operations from " experience-driven " to " data-driven. "

2.5. Customer Service: AI-Supported Multilingual Communication and Intelligent Response

Customer service is the key point of the brand globalization. Under the traditional model, cross-border customer service relies on manual teams, and faces problems such as multilingual communication barriers, lagging time difference response, and high costs. Based on natural language processing and machine translation technology, AI reshapes this link from two aspects: at the multilingual communication level, it realizes multilingual automatic translation and semantic understanding, and can reach the global market without forming a multilingual team. AI customer service system can automatically deal with high-frequency problems such as fabric consulting, size recommendation, logistics query, and provide all-weather services ; at the level of intelligent response, by analyzing user behavior and historical data, pre-sales actively identify potential needs and trigger recommendations, and automatically complete logistics tracking, return and exchange guidance and other processes after sales. The after-sales cost can be reduced by more than 30%, which significantly reduces the service threshold and improves the user experience. In the practice of Suzhou, Bosideng built AI shopping guide assistant to provide personalized recommendation; professional AI service providers such as Shulex have entered the Jiangsu market, and the order conversion rate of local ' Lingxi Cross-border ' SaaS customer service software cooperative enterprises has increased by an average of 35%. In general, AI is extending from multilingual translation and intelligent response to full-link experience management, promoting the transformation of cross-border services from " human-intensive " to " intelligent-driven. "

3. Strategic Countermeasures for AI-Empowered CBEC Brand Globalization in Suzhou's Textile Sector

Although the above four links have achieved initial results, they remain isolated and have yet to form a coordinated effort, which constitutes the key bottleneck of brand globalization. It needs to be systematically promoted from the following five dimensions, as shown in Figure 3.

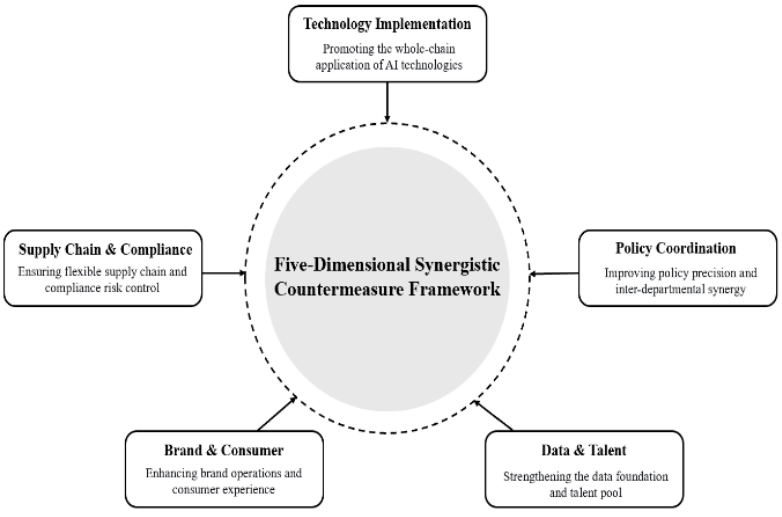

Figure 3: AI-Empowered Brand Globalization Framework.

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3.1. End-to-End AI Adoption across the Full Chain

At present, the AI application of Suzhou textile and garment industry mostly stays in a single point attempt, and has not yet formed a full-link systematic integration. To promote AI from " single-point empowerment " to " full-chain drive, " it is necessary to promote it from three levels : leading enterprises ' benchmarking, inclusive application of small and medium-sized enterprises, and industry-level public service platform. At the level of leading enterprises, Bosideng has built an integrated scheme of " AI empowerment + digital penetration " covering all links, selected as a typical case of digital leadership by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology in 2025, driven more than 200 suppliers to digitally transform, and increased inventory turnover by 30%. It is recommended to set up special support funds for industry AI to support qualified enterprises to promote full-link transformation by referring to the Bosideng path. At the level of small and medium-sized enterprises, more than 700 enterprises in Changshu have completed digital transformation, and labor productivity has increased by 35%. However, most of them still face constraints such as weak technical foundation and limited investment. It is recommended to rely on Shengze 's ' AI + Textile Big Model ' (which has imported 90,000 looms data) to promote the bulk access of standardized tools such as design assistance, intelligent quality inspection, and demand forecasting through government-subsidized services or computing-power subsidies. At the level of platform construction, it is suggested that the municipal authorities should take the lead in building the industry AI public service platform, provide a standardized tool set covering fabric planning, design and development, production and manufacturing, cross-border marketing and other links for small and medium-sized enterprises, and establish an industry data sharing mechanism to break the data island.

These three levels respectively solve the problems of " how to do, " " affordable " and " supported. " They are interconnected and complementary to each other, forming a systematic promotion path from " single point exploration " to " whole chain collaboration. "

3.2. Building a Flexible Supply Chain and Compliance Risk Control System

Suzhou textile and garment industry has long been dominated by mass and long-term OEM, which is difficult to adapt to the needs of cross-border e-commerce ' small batch, multi-variety and fast delivery ' ; at the same time, cross-border operations involve complex compliance requirements such as product standards, intellectual property rights, tax and customs, and the ability of SMEs to prevent and control overseas risks is weak. Building a flexible supply chain and compliance risk control system is the basic guarantee for the brand globalization. In terms of flexible supply chain construction, Bosideng 's ' AI-driven full-link collaboration ' model should be promoted. The Bosideng flexible supply chain system connects 2556 suppliers and processors, and the data accuracy rate is increased to 98%, which drives the digital transformation of more than 200 suppliers. The response speed of the supply chain is increased by 50%, and the inventory turnover rate is increased by 30%. More than 700 enterprises in Changshu have completed digital transformation, labor productivity has increased by 35%, and the response time of ' small single fast reaction ' has been reduced to 7 days. It is recommended to promote the ' AI + flexible supply chain ' model in Shengze, Changshu and other industrial zones, guide enterprises to build intelligent warehousing and digital collaborative platforms, and enhance cross-border performance capabilities with the help of overseas warehouse information upgrading. In terms of compliance risk control, Wujiang District has built the country 's first cross-border e-commerce intellectual property cross-domain risk prevention platform, integrating risk physical examination, dispute response, international empowerment and other functions, and was selected as the " micro-reform " project of the whole chain protection of intellectual property rights in Jiangsu Province.

3.3. Strengthening Brand Operations and Consumer Service Capabilities

The cross-border e-commerce of Suzhou textile and garment industry is still dominated by ' selling '. The transformation from OEM export to independent brand management needs to be promoted from three aspects : brand cultivation, channel operation and consumption experience. In terms of brand cultivation, Suzhou 's cross-border e-commerce policy in 2025 clearly grants 200,000 yuan in subsidies to enterprises that build and operate independent stations and invest more than 500,000 yuan, and supplements 30,000 yuan for every 100,000 yuan increase in costs, and encourages overseas trademark registration and international certification. It is suggested to set up brand incubation special projects in Shengze, Changshu and other industrial belts to support conditional enterprises to take the lead in transforming to independent brand management. In terms of channel operation, Changshu actively guides enterprises to connect TEMU, SHEIN, TikTok Shop and other platforms. Suzhou Cross-border E-

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commerce Selection Center has collected more than 770 products from 151 enterprises. It is recommended to support enterprises to build a multi-channel matrix of ' third-party platform + independent station ', reduce the risk of relying on a single platform, and rely on carriers such as Amazon 's global store Suzhou Cross-border Service Space to provide standardized services such as brand positioning and overseas social media operations.

3.4. Consolidating Data Infrastructure and Interdisciplinary Talent Supply

Data and talents are the basic support for AI-enabled brand globalization. At present, industry data is scattered, circulation is not smooth, high-quality training data is insufficient, and there is a serious shortage of compound talents, which together constitute a key bottleneck. In terms of data base construction, Suzhou has issued a data industry and ' AI + ' urban action plan, aiming to build 300 high-quality industry data sets by the end of 2026; Jiangsu Branch of China Industrial Internet Research Institute has released a textile data set. Wujiang District 's " AI + Industrial Chain Internal Circulation Capability Improvement Platform " takes 300 million enterprise data and more than 1,000 industrial chain maps as the core base. It is suggested to rely on the online platform of Suzhou cross-border e-commerce comprehensive test area, integrate Shengze 's ' AI + textile big model ', Changshu industrial big data and other resources, build an industry data sharing platform, unify standards, open up islands, and provide high-quality data supply for AI model training. In terms of the supply of compound talents, 20 measures of cross-border e-commerce in Suzhou have set up a special e-commerce talent for the first time, giving 60,000 to 300,000 yuan of salary subsidies; the " Key Industry Shortage Talent Plan " provides guarantees in terms of settlement, house purchase, and children 's education.

Suzhou Polytechnic University led the establishment of cross-border e-commerce industry college, Yangcheng Digital Valley signed a school-enterprise alliance, and Amazon Cloud Technology Plan cultivated no less than 1,000 talents.

3.5. Enhancing the Precision and Coordination of Industrial Policies

Suzhou has formed a policy framework system of cross-border e-commerce and artificial intelligence: the " 3-year action plan for cross-border e-commerce " proposes that the import and export volume will reach 150 billion yuan in 2026, and 10,000 private brands going global; the 20 measures of cross-border e-commerce provide support from six aspects and establish a cross-sectoral consultation mechanism; the ' artificial intelligence + ' series of policies provide institutional guarantee. The policy system is basically complete, but there is still room for improvement in accuracy and synergy. In terms of accuracy, the existing policies focus on inclusiveness and lack of response to the differentiated needs of the textile and garment industry. It is suggested to introduce special rules for the industry: in terms of brand globalization, refine the stepped subsidies for independent stations and overseas trademark registration; in terms of AI application, the typical scene of ' artificial intelligence + textile ' is included in special support; in terms of overseas warehouses, the requirements of AI, 5G and other technologies to enable intelligent upgrading are implemented. Each county-level city can superimpose supporting measures to avoid a one-size-fits-all approach across government levels. In terms of synergy, cross-border e-commerce involves multiple departments such as commerce, customs, taxation, foreign exchange, and market supervision, and there is still fragmentation in implementation. Enterprises face problems such as multiple release channels and inconsistent interpretations when obtaining policy information. It is recommended to implement the joint meeting system, clarify the division of responsibilities and information sharing process, and promote regulatory innovation and policy convergence in customs clearance, taxation, foreign exchange and other links ; establish a unified publishing and interpretation platform to achieve ' one-stop ' information export ; synchronously establish a third-party evaluation and dynamic adjustment mechanism, and revise it in time according to the actual situation of the industry to ensure that the policy is " useful and effective. "

4. Conclusion

This paper takes Suzhou textile and garment industry as the object, and systematically examines the current situation, mechanism and countermeasures of artificial intelligence enabling cross-border e-commerce brand globalization. The study found that the cross-border e-commerce brand of Suzhou textile and garment industry is still in its infancy, and the three gaps of brand ability, technology application and policy supply are mutually reinforcing, which constitutes a structural obstacle that is difficult to break through in industrial transformation. Although the empowerment of artificial

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intelligence in the four links of design and development, brand marketing, operation management and customer service has achieved partial results, it is still based on single-point exploration and has not yet achieved full-link systematic integration. To promote the brand 's breakthrough, it is necessary to coordinate the five dimensions of full-link technology landing, flexible supply chain and compliance risk control, brand operation and consumption experience, data base and talent supply, and policy precision coordination. In addition, this paper is only a case study of a single city in Suzhou. The scope of the sample can be expanded in the future, and the panel data at the enterprise level can be introduced to deepen the quantitative evaluation of the empowerment effect, to further track the reconstruction effect of generative artificial intelligence on the brand globalization model.

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