

Current situation and policy research on the high-quality development of Chinese foreign trade from the perspective of new quality productivity

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Abstract: This paper discusses the current situation and policy of high-quality development of China's foreign trade from the perspective of new quality productivity. In the context of changes in the global political and economic pattern and the new normal of domestic economic development, China is facing the challenge of traditional trade growth mode, which needs to be promoted through scientific and independent innovation, industrial upgrading, digital transformation and green development high quality development of foreign trade. This paper first analyzes the connotation and characteristics of new quality productivity, and emphasizes the key role of scientific and technological independent innovation in promoting productivity. Then, it expounds and analyzes the development status of China's foreign trade, and points out several risks and challenges facing the high-quality development of China's foreign trade, such as industrial structure upgrading, lack of independent innovation ability, increasing trade friction and increasing resource and environmental constraints. In order to better cope with these risks and challenges, the Chinese government has actively taken relevant measures, including optimizing the trade structure, upgrading innovation-driven industries, cultivating new forms of business, and taking into account the coordinated development of internal and external cycles. In the end, this paper emphasizes the positive role of China's foreign trade development and transformation in the global economy.

Keywords: New quality productivity; Foreign trade; High-quality development

1. Introduction

In the context of economic globalization, major changes unseen in a century are constantly evolving.

The new global political and economic pattern is forcing countries to enhance their national competitiveness, actively step up independent scientific and technological innovation and industrial transformation, and explore new productivity models. After decades of development of reform and opening up, the level of productivity in China has been significantly improved, making the development of China's foreign trade achieve a historic leap, and the scale of foreign trade import and export has expanded rapidly. However, as China's economic development has entered the new normal, it is urgent to find a new mode of economic development that breaks through the existing bottleneck of economic development. Faced with the realistic problems such as the weak growth of traditional resource-intensive and labor-intensive industries and the decline of marginal investment benefit, the traditional trade growth model has been unable to provide sufficient impetus for the high-quality development of China's foreign trade. Moreover, under the tide of "anti-globalization", some western developed countries rely on their own technological advantages, and take many ways to hinder the development of China's high-tech industry, such as strategic containment, technological decoupling, and rule suppression, making China's economic development face more fierce competition and change challenges.

The General Secretary pointed out: "The development of new quality productivity is an inherent requirement and an important focus to promote high-quality development, we must continue to do a good job of innovation, and promote the development of new quality productivity." The General Secretary emphasizes that innovation consciousness plays a leading role in the formation of new quality productivity, which is a new type of productivity driven by innovation, supported by scientific and technological progress, and targeted at efficiency and quality improvement^[10]. This development

of productive forces not only requires us to get rid of the shackles of the traditional economic growth mode, but also requires us to achieve fundamental changes in the mode of production, economic structure and development path.

Therefore, in order to maintain an invincible position in the fierce international competition and achieve high-quality development of China's economy, various industries need to strengthen the pace of independent research and development and innovation, actively promote the formation of their new quality productivity, and then promote the high-quality development of China's foreign trade.

2. The connotation and characteristics of new quality productivity

2.1 The connotation of new quality productivity

The new quality productivity is the productivity with new technology, new economy and new business form as the main content. The new quality productivity is a leap on the basis of traditional productivity, and the qualitative improvement of the constituent elements of productivity represents a leap of productivity. The proposal of the new quality productivity is a new understanding of the development law of China's productive forces^[3].

In the new quality productivity, the productivity that plays a leading role is scientific and technological innovation, especially the productivity of key disruptive technologies to achieve breakthroughs, with high efficiency, reflecting high quality. It is very different from the traditional trade mode of "three high and one low", and the productivity that gets rid of the traditional growth path and meets the requirements of high-quality development is the productivity that is more integrated and reflects the new connotation in the digital era.

2.2 The characteristics of new quality productivity

2.2.1 Driven by scientific and technological innovation

With the arrival of a new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial revolution, scientific and technological innovation and social productivity are more and more closely related, and scientific and technological innovation as a driving force of productivity is becoming more and more obvious. Therefore, scholars generally emphasize that new quality productivity has the fundamental driving characteristics of high-tech innovation from the dynamic dimension^[7]. Cultivate and form new productivity, the key lies in the innovation of science and technology. Compared with the traditional productivity, the essence of the new quality productivity is more focused on scientific and technological innovation, through the introduction of new and diversified new elements such as high-tech, innovative products, cutting-edge models and emerging business forms, to promote the revolutionary jump in productivity. The formation and development of new quality productivity is a complex systematic project, which requires us to make great efforts in the cultivation of innovative thinking, the optimal allocation of resources, the upgrading of new industries and other aspects.

2.2.2 Industrial efficiency and low consumption

New quality productivity is regarded as a form of productivity with high efficiency and low energy consumption, which promotes the development of green energy, clean production and environmental protection industries by encouraging the application of innovative technologies, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions and carbon footprint. New quality productivity emphasizes the cultivation of new materials, new energy and advanced manufacturing and other strategic emerging industries, but also actively cultivate future industries.

2.2.3 Empowering the digital economy

The new quality productivity is the productivity that is more integrated and embodies the new connotation in the digital age. Through the application of digital technology and the cross-border integration of traditional industries, new productivity forms have been formed, thus promoting the upgrading and transformation of various fields^[8]. As a key production factor of the country, data factors, combined with computing power, will derive and form a strong data productivity and become an important part of new quality productivity. In this sense, the digitalization and intelligentization of productivity is an important feature of new quality productivity, and it is also the basic trend of productivity development under the conditions of a new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial change.

2.2.4 Achieve a high quality of life

New quality productivity can achieve a high quality of life for people, and through the popularization of digital technology and the development of the Internet, people can have more equal access to various public services. Through the rise of the digital economy, the government can use big data analysis and artificial intelligence technology to achieve accurate decision-making and scientific governance, and optimize public services and resource allocation. At the same time, the development of new quality productivity also facilitates the interaction between the government and the public, enhances the sense of participation and satisfaction of the people, and promotes the modernization of national governance capacity.

3. Current situation of high-quality development of Chinese foreign trade

3.1 Total import and export trade continued to grow

China is the world's largest trader of goods and importer of services, with both exports and imports hitting record highs^[4]. The scale of China's foreign trade continues to expand, the annual total trade continues to increase, and the total scale of trade has made new breakthroughs. In 2023, China's total import and export of goods reached 41,756.8 billion yuan, a year-on-year increase of 0.2 percent, of which exports increased by 0.6 percent and imports decreased slightly by 0.3 percent. China's export international market share remained at about 14%, the global trade in goods size 7 consecutive years to maintain the first position. Against the backdrop of sluggish world economic recovery, China's foreign trade has shown strong resilience and comprehensive competitiveness.

3.2 More diversified export markets

China's foreign trade structure has continued to improve, with more diversified export markets. The proportion of exports of mechanical and electrical products has increased, the proportion of imports and exports of general trade has increased, and the proportion of imports of consumer goods has increased. At the same time, China actively cultivates new driving forces for foreign trade development, such as electric vehicles, lithium batteries, solar cells and other "new three" products export growth is significant. The total volume of cross-border e-commerce imports and exports reached 2.38 trillion yuan in 2023, doubling in five years, and the proportion of China's total imports and exports increased from 3.46% in 2018 to 5.66% in 2023. Multi-level and multi-structure import and export products confirm that China's export products have sufficient advantages and stable supply and demand^[9].

3.3 New business forms such as cross-border e-commerce are booming

With the development of information network technology, cross-border e-commerce, as an important part of China's new foreign trade format, has developed rapidly in recent years. The Chinese government attaches great importance to the healthy growth of new forms of business such as cross-border e-commerce, and has issued a series of policy measures to promote its rapid and smooth development, and then enable the high-quality development of foreign trade industry. In recent years, the scale of cross-border e-commerce imports and exports has shown a trend of continuous growth. In 2022, its scale reached 2.11 trillion yuan, a year-on-year increase of 9.8%, of which exports increased by 11.7% and imports by 4.9%. In the first half of 2023, the import and export scale of cross-border e-commerce was about 1.1 trillion yuan, an increase of 16.6% over the same period in 2022, the growth rate accelerated by 13.7 percentage points, accounting for 5.5% of the total value of China's trade in goods in the same period, the proportion increased by 0.7 percentage points.

3.4 The scale and strength of private enterprises are growing rapidly

In 2023, the import and export volume of China's private enterprises accounted for 53.5% of the country's total import and export volume, becoming the largest foreign trade business entity in China for five consecutive years. The main position of private enterprises in the field of foreign trade has been continuously consolidated, and the quantity and output value have achieved significant growth. Among the self-owned brand products exported, the contribution of private enterprises accounted for 66.4%, showing its important role in enhancing the brand influence and international competitiveness of "Made in China".

In terms of the cultivation of new momentum in foreign trade, private enterprises in the field of new energy, high-tech products and other outstanding performance, such as solar cells, lithium batteries, electric manned vehicles and other "new three" products export growth is rapid, the proportion of private enterprises in these areas of export significantly increased. At the same time, private enterprises have also played an active role in the import and export of consumer goods, becoming the leading force in the export of textile and clothing, shoes and boots, luggage and other products.

4. Chinese foreign trade develops with high quality

The high-quality development of China's foreign trade is not only related to the domestic industrial structure, technological level and innovation capacity, but also influenced by multiple factors such as the global economic environment, trade rules and international political relations. The main problems are:

4.1 The industrial structure needs further upgrading

This is an important factor restricting the current high-quality development of China's foreign trade. Although China has become the world's largest manufacturing power, many industries still have shortcomings such as low technology content, low added value, and small profit margins. In 2022, the number of foreign trade enterprises in China will be 1.976 million, and the total export volume will reach 2.5 trillion yuan. From the perspective of industry, China's foreign trade enterprises are mainly concentrated in the general trade industry. In 2022, the export volume of general trade is 15.95 trillion yuan, accounting for 60% of the total import and export volume of the country, although the proportion of general trade is relatively high, but most of the domestic foreign trade enterprises are small in scale and weak in competitiveness. In 2022, only 17 of China's top 100 export enterprises are general trade export enterprises, accounting for about 17.6%. From the perspective of enterprise scale, most foreign trade enterprises are mainly small-scale, and there is a certain lack of anti-risk ability.

4.2 The ability of independent innovation is insufficient

The lack of independent innovation ability will seriously restrict the high-quality development of China's foreign trade. In recent years, although China has made remarkable progress in scientific and technological independent innovation, the gap is still obvious compared with developed countries, and some core technologies still have the problem of "stuck neck".

Although China has increased the investment of R&D funds in various strategic industrial fields, the conversion efficiency between innovation output and input still needs to be improved, especially in the field of manufacturing. In some high-tech and high value-added industries, China's production capacity and technical capacity are still unable to meet market demand, and it is necessary to further enhance the technical level and innovation capacity of the industry.

4.3 Trade frictions are increasing

In recent years, judging from the high-quality development process of China's foreign trade, it has indeed encountered some challenges of trade frictions. With the constant changes in the global economic pattern, international trade rules are constantly adjusted and improved. However, some developed countries have taken advantage of their dominant position in the formulation of international trade rules and concocted a series of trade rules that are unfavorable to China, which not only restricts the export market of Chinese products, but also increases the risk and uncertainty of China's foreign trade.

4.4 Increasing constraints on resources and the environment

As the constraints of resources and environment are indeed increasing, the rapid economic development has caused resource depletion and environmental pollution to seriously restrict China's sustainable development^[1]. This is mainly reflected in the following aspects:

(1) The carrying capacity of resources and environment reaches the bottleneck. With the rapid development of economy, the problem of resource consumption and environmental pollution has become increasingly prominent. China is facing the constraints of energy resources, and needs to

transform its development mode, reduce its dependence on traditional energy sources, and promote green and low-carbon development.

(2) Overcapacity problem. Some industries in China, such as petrochemical raw materials, conventional non-high-end chips, automobiles, and new energy vehicles, are facing a new round of overcapacity. This not only affects the domestic market, but also international trade, which needs to be addressed through measures such as expanding domestic demand, optimizing the industrial structure, and promoting technological innovation.

(3) Industrial structure adjustment. China is promoting the optimization and upgrading of its industrial structure, encouraging the development of high-tech industries and service industries, while adjusting traditional industries that are highly polluting and energy-intensive. The release of the Guidance Catalogue for Industrial Restructuring (2024 edition) defines the industries to be encouraged, restricted and eliminated, and guides resources to be concentrated in more efficient and environmentally friendly areas.

(4) Regional development is unbalanced. China has a vast territory, and there are differences in resource endowment and economic development level among different regions, which lead to the imbalance of regional development. In order to effectively solve the problem of unbalanced regional development and promote the coordinated development of different regions, the Chinese government has put forward and implemented a series of regional development strategies, such as the western development, the revitalization of the northeast and the rise of the central region.

5. Policies to promote the high-quality development of our foreign trade

The Chinese government has put forward and implemented a series of policy measures to promote high-quality development of foreign trade. These policies aimed at raising the level of comprehensive strength, coordination, innovation in trade, circulating ability, open cooperation and trade security system. Specific policy priorities include:

5.1 Optimize trade structure

In order to improve the quality and efficiency of trade development, China has made efforts in many aspects and areas, such as international and domestic market layout, commodity structure, trade methods, and business entities. The policy encourages the development of trade in high-quality, high-tech and high value-added products, raises the grade and added value of labor-intensive products, and optimizes the trade structure of capital goods and consumer goods.

Today, our manufacturing industry is facing competitive pressure from countries such as India and Thailand, which are known for their lower production costs. In foreign trade, China's traditional comparative competitive advantage is being lost, in order to improve the ability of independent innovation and promote the transformation of economic growth mode, China must actively cultivate and develop those strategic industries.

In addition, China needs to quickly adjust the industrial layout, especially in the policy to support the eastern coastal areas to high-end manufacturing and high value-added industries transformation. Thoroughly implement the strategy of coordinated regional development, strengthen inter-regional industrial transfer and exchanges and cooperation, strengthen the coordination of innovation, coordination, green, open and sharing new development concepts, and adjust the direction of work according to the actual situation of the region ^[5].

5.2 Innovation drives industrial upgrading

From the perspective of the growth of the new quality productivity, only by focusing on the revolutionary breakthrough and subversive innovation of technology can we effectively promote the high-quality development of our foreign trade. We will encourage independent innovation in science and technology, innovation in supporting systems, and innovation in models and business forms to enhance the competitiveness of foreign trade. The policy emphasizes the integration of new technologies such as the Internet, big data and artificial intelligence with trade, as well as support for the import and export of green and low-carbon products.

New quality productivity has become an important driving force for China to climb from the

low-end to the medium-high end of the global value chain. Through continuous technological innovation and industrial upgrading, China is cultivating a group of chain master enterprises and key node control enterprises, creating a group of world-class enterprises that dominate the global value chain. In the context of accelerating the development of new quality productivity, the industrial form will gradually shift to digital, intelligent and green, and the future industry spawned by cutting-edge technologies such as general artificial intelligence, brain-computer interface, quantum computing and quantum communication [6].

5.3 Foster new forms of business

From the perspective of new quality productivity, the high-quality development of China's foreign trade must cultivate new forms of business, which is the key to promote trade growth and enhance international competitiveness. Some measures that can be taken to foster new forms of foreign trade are:

(1) We will strengthen the transformation of trade in services. In order to smoothly promote the transformation of the service trade industry, the Chinese government issued the Opinions on Promoting the High-quality Development of Service Trade with a High Level of opening Up, and put forward 20 key tasks in five aspects, including promoting institutional opening-up of trade in services, promoting cross-border flow of resource factors, and promoting innovative development in key areas, so as to accelerate the high-quality development of China's trade in services.

(2) We will strengthen green trade. With the global attention to green and low-carbon development, China is vigorously developing green technology and green service trade, and promoting the structure of import and export products to the green, low-carbon and sustainable direction to help achieve China's carbon peak and carbon neutral goals.

(3) Digital transformation. Digital transformation plays a key role in the development of China's foreign trade, which can empower the development of foreign trade industry in many aspects such as supply chain optimization, data analysis, and product innovation, improve the efficiency and effect of foreign trade enterprises, reduce their costs, open up new markets and business models for them, and make them maintain a leading position in the global competition.

(4) The rapid development of new business forms. The rapid development of new formats brings risks and challenges to China's foreign trade industry, but also brings new opportunities and empowerment for the high-quality development of foreign trade. The establishment and popularization of digital platforms, the optimization and innovation of supply chains, the development of cross-border e-commerce and other emerging business forms have brought new directions and opportunities for the transformation and upgrading of the foreign trade industry.

5.4 Coordinated development of internal and external circulation

From the perspective of new quality productivity research, the high-quality development of China's foreign trade must take into account the coordinated development of internal and external circulation, which is an inherent requirement for building a new development pattern and promoting high-quality development [2]

(1) In terms of foreign trade rules and systems, strengthen the convergence and integration of domestic foreign trade rules and systems. By promoting the convergence of domestic and foreign trade standards, inspection and certification, regulatory convergence and other measures, we will reduce the institutional cost of market conversion, increase the conversion rate of international standards, and optimize domestic and international standard services.

(2) We will support foreign trade enterprises in expanding the domestic market. The Chinese government has adopted a series of policy measures, such as carrying out centralized procurement mode, actively organizing domestic sales activities of high-quality foreign trade products, using e-commerce platforms to promote high-quality foreign trade goods, and helping export enterprises to better meet the domestic market demand.

(3) We will support local enterprises to expand into foreign markets. For potential local enterprises, relevant policy publicity and business training should be carried out to strengthen their understanding of new forms and models of the industry, cultivate innovative thinking of local enterprises, and improve their self-confidence in going abroad. Assist local foreign trade enterprises to actively explore

the international market by using digital platforms, supply chain optimization and other new ways, promote high-quality implementation of free trade agreements, and expand the international development space of enterprises.

6. Conclusions

From the perspective of new quality productivity, the current situation and policy research of high-quality development of China's foreign trade reveal China's positive role and strategic transformation in the global economy. Faced with a complex and changing international environment and the new normal of domestic economic development, China is promoting deep changes in the field of foreign trade through multi-dimensional strategies such as innovation-driven, structural optimization, digital transformation, green development and internal and external circulation coordination.

In order to stabilize and enhance the international competitiveness of China's foreign trade, the Chinese government has introduced a number of relevant policies and measures aimed at fostering new forms and models of business, strengthening technological innovation, upgrading the modernization of industrial chains and supply chains, and actively participating in international cooperation and global governance to achieve a more open, inclusive, balanced and win-win international trade environment. The implementation of these policies has provided new impetus to the recovery and growth of the global economy.

Looking forward to the future, the high-quality development of China's foreign trade will continue to rely on the cultivation and application of new quality productive forces. By deepening reform, expanding opening-up and strengthening international cooperation, China is expected to play a greater role in building a new development pattern and make greater contributions to promoting the sustainable development of global trade and economy.

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