

Research on the Talent Cultivation Model of International Trade Under the Background of the Digital Economy

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Abstract: With the widespread application of digital technology in the field of international trade, the cultivation of professionals in international trade is facing new challenges and opportunities. This paper aims to explore how to construct a talent cultivation model for international trade majors that meets the demands of the digital economy era. Through an in-depth analysis of the impact of the digital economy on international trade, the study identifies key competencies required for modern international trade professionals, such as digital literacy and innovative capabilities. The findings are expected to provide theoretical support and practical guidance for cultivating international trade professionals suited to the digital economy era.

Keywords: Digital economy; International trade major; Talent cultivation model; Curriculum system; Practical teaching

Online publication: September 17, 2026

1. Introduction

In recent years, the digital economy has developed rapidly and driven the rapid growth of the global economy. The wide application of digital technologies in international trade is transforming traditional trade modes. New forms and models such as cross-border e-commerce and digital trade keep emerging, and digital tools have been widely applied in links including trade negotiation, contract signing, logistics tracking and payment settlement ^[1]. This series of transformations has raised new requirements for the knowledge structure, skill proficiency, and overall quality of international trade talents. The traditional talent cultivation model for international trade majors fails to satisfy the talent demands in the digital economy era. Therefore, exploring a talent cultivation model for international trade adapted to the background of the digital economy bears important practical significance.

2. Impacts of digital economy on international trade

2.1. Overview of digital economy

The digital economy refers to a new economic form that takes digital knowledge and information as key production factors, digital technologies as core driving forces, and modern information networks as important carriers. Through in-depth integration of digital technologies and real industries, it continuously improves the digital and intelligent level of traditional industries and accelerates the restructuring of economic development and government governance models ^[2].

2.2. Transformation of international trade modes driven by digital economy

Profound transformations have taken place in international trade modes in the digital economy era. Traditional international transactions mainly rely on offline exhibitions and intermediaries, with tedious procedures and high costs. The application of digital technologies enables faster and more convenient transmission of trade information, allowing buyers and sellers to communicate and trade directly via internet platforms and greatly shorten trade chains. The rise of cross-border e-commerce serves as a typical example of the digital economy transforming international trade modes ^[3]. Through cross-border e-commerce platforms, small and medium-sized enterprises and even individuals can participate in international trade, realizing the diversification of trade entities.

2.3. Shift in talent demands of international trade brought by the digital economy

The development of the digital economy has significantly changed enterprises' talent demands in international trade. On the one hand, enterprises need talents with solid professional knowledge of international trade who are familiar with international trade rules and procedures. On the other hand, compound talents mastering digital technologies who can analyze markets with big data, conduct intelligent marketing and carry out trade businesses via digital platforms are more urgently needed.

Specifically, new-type international trade talents shall possess digital literacy, being proficient in applying digital tools for data analysis and decision-making. For instance, they can mine market data with analytical software to provide a basis for enterprises to formulate marketing strategies. They also need innovative capabilities to continuously explore new trade modes and business growth points under the digital economy environment. Meanwhile, competent foreign language communication, teamwork and cross-cultural communication skills are indispensable. In cross-border e-commerce businesses, communication with clients from various countries and regions is required, so foreign language proficiency and cross-cultural competence are critical for business development ^[4].

3. Analysis of the current situation of international trade talent cultivation

3.1. Current cultivation models

At present, the talent cultivation models of international trade majors in Chinese universities are mainly based on disciplinary knowledge systems, attaching importance to theoretical teaching. Core traditional courses including Economics, International Trade Theory and Policy and International Commercial Law are set in curricula. In terms of teaching methods, teacher-centered lecture teaching dominates while students receive knowledge passively. Practical teaching is relatively weak, mainly carried out through on-campus simulation training and off-campus internships ^[5]. On-campus simulation training generally adopts international trade

simulation software for students to experience trade procedures in virtual environments; off-campus internships mainly arrange students to work in foreign trade enterprises for a short term to understand actual business operations.

3.2. Existing problems and challenges

(1) Lagging Curriculum System Behind Digital Economy Development

The curriculum system of international trade majors currently lacks sufficient courses related to digital technologies and new digital trade forms. Most universities only offer basic computer courses, without in-depth courses on big data analysis, artificial intelligence application and cross-border e-commerce operation. As a result, students lack a thorough understanding of digital technology application in international trade and cannot meet enterprises' demands for new-type trade talents ^[6].

(2) Deficiency of Digital Tools and Real Scenarios in Practical Teaching

Practical teaching constitutes a vital link for international trade talent cultivation, yet it faces multiple current deficiencies. Although on-campus simulation training enables students to learn trade procedures, simulation software has huge gaps compared with real digital trade platforms, failing to provide authentic business scenarios and data. Due to the complexity and confidentiality of enterprise businesses during off-campus internships, students can only participate in simple tasks and hardly gain an in-depth understanding of core businesses and digital technology application in real work ^[7].

(3) Insufficient Digital Competence of Teaching Staff

Teachers act as the core factor of talent cultivation. However, most teachers of international trade majors lack knowledge and practical experience related to the digital economy. During teaching, they cannot organically integrate digital technologies with international trade expertise and provide high-quality guidance for students ^[8]. A survey on international trade teachers in partial universities shows that only 20% possess certain digital technology application capabilities, and the proportion of teachers proficient in digital tools for teaching and research is even lower. Restricted by teachers' insufficient digital competence, courses fail to elaborate new theories, methods, and practices of international trade under the digital economy thoroughly, hindering students' mastery and application of relevant knowledge.

4. Exploration of international trade talent cultivation model under digital economy

4.1. Clarify cultivation objectives adapted to the digital economy

Under the background of the digital economy, the cultivation objective of international trade majors shall be positioned as cultivating compound talents with solid international trade expertise, proficient digital technology application skills in international trade, innovative spirit, practical capabilities, and global vision ^[9]. Students shall be capable of operating international trade businesses with digital tools under the digital economy, analyzing and solving practical international trade problems, and supporting enterprises' digital transformation and international business expansion.

Specifically, cross-border e-commerce, big data and cloud technology can be integrated into International Economy and Trade majors to realize interdisciplinary integration centered on "digital technology + economic theory + trade practice", cultivating applied compound talents equipped with "digital skills + theoretical knowledge + trade operational capabilities"^[10].

4.2. Optimize curriculum system

(1) Add Courses on Digital Technologies and New Trade Forms

To adapt the curriculum system to digital economy development, more courses concerning digital technologies, big data analysis and digital platforms shall be added, especially integrated courses of commerce and big data, commerce and information technology, so as to form a complete curriculum system integrating digital trade theories, information technologies and trade big data operation^[11]. In terms of new trade form courses, new courses such as blockchain application in trade, artificial intelligence empowering international trade and cross-border e-commerce live streaming marketing shall be offered, with enterprise specialists participating in curriculum design and teaching to introduce cutting-edge industrial knowledge and practical skills into classrooms.

(2) Digitize and Practicize Traditional Curriculum Contents

Besides adding new courses, traditional international trade courses shall be reconstructed with digital and practical orientations. Interdisciplinary, comprehensive and diversified experimental training courses can effectively improve practical teaching quality. For example, in the course *International Trade Practice*, contents including electronic contract signing, digital customs declaration and online payment settlement shall be supplemented; simulation cross-border e-commerce training courses can be combined with big data analysis training courses; in *International Marketing*, digital marketing approaches such as social media marketing and search engine optimization shall be introduced^[12].

Meanwhile, digital platforms shall be fully utilized to carry out scenario simulation and other digital teaching methods. For instance, a series of international trade projects can be designed in *International Trade Practice*, requiring student groups to complete the whole process from trade negotiation to goods delivery and deepen comprehension through practice.

4.3. Strengthen practical teaching

(1) Build Digital Practical Teaching Platforms

To provide students with authentic digital trade practice environments, universities shall cooperate with enterprises to build cross-border e-commerce practice bases and digital trade innovation laboratories, introducing real enterprise business data and projects for students to conduct simulation drills and practical operations on the platforms^[13]. Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) technologies can be adopted to build immersive trade practice scenarios and enhance students' learning experience and effectiveness. For example, a university cooperated with a cross-border e-commerce enterprise to build a practice base equipped with advanced e-commerce operation equipment and software, where students can carry out practical work such as cross-border store operation, digital marketing and customer service.

(2) Deepen School-Enterprise Cooperation and Internship Training

School-enterprise cooperation is an important way to improve the quality of practical teaching. Universities should actively establish cooperative relations with enterprises, build stable off-campus internship bases, encourage students to go deep into frontline enterprise posts, participate in practical trade operations, experience international trade processes firsthand, deepen their professional skills through real-world practice, and accumulate valuable industry experience. Models such as order-based training and modern apprenticeships allow enterprises to participate deeply in the talent cultivation process.

4.4. Teaching staff construction

(1) Improve Teachers' Digital Teaching Competence

Teachers' digital teaching ability is a core factor influencing talent cultivation quality. Universities shall strengthen digital training for international trade teachers to upgrade their proficiency in digital technologies and digital teaching. By organizing training on digital trade and digital skills, teachers can keep abreast of the latest trends and post demands of foreign trade industries and adopt information technologies to promote teaching reform in response to curriculum updates in the digital trade era ^[14].

(2) Introduce Professionals in Digital Economy Fields

To optimize the teaching staff structure, universities shall actively introduce enterprise specialists with rich practical experience to make up the shortage of on-campus practical instructors and strengthen students' post cognition and operational capabilities. These talents possess solid digital expertise and a profound understanding of international trade businesses, and are able to provide interdisciplinary guidance for students. Experts, enterprise executives and technical backbones in digital economy fields can be recruited as full-time, part-time or visiting professors to deliver lectures ^[15].

5. Conclusion

With the continuous expansion of the digital economy, digital technologies are constantly driving the digital transformation of international trade, which inevitably imposes new and higher requirements on the knowledge structure, skill proficiency and comprehensive quality of professionals in international trade. Against the backdrop of digital trade, we should explore talent training models for international trade majors suited to the digital economy, reform traditional talent training mechanisms, cultivate professionals proficient in both "digital technologies" and international trade expertise, and boost the market competitiveness of international trade professionals.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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