

County E-Commerce as an Innovative Way to Promote County Economic Development: A Conceptual Analysis

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Abstract

With the proposed rural revitalization strategy, China is implementing the tasks related to rural revitalization. The development of county-level e-commerce has a facilitating role in promoting county-level economic development to realize rural revitalization. This paper analyzes the practical significance of county-level e-commerce for precise poverty alleviation by examining the existing literature and economic growth theories. By using qualitative analysis on county-level e-commerce and economic growth, three effective paths for developing county-level e-commerce are explored, namely: branding and developing sales channels; strengthening government leadership and establishing incentives; and actively carrying out e-commerce training to help the county's economic development.

Keywords: County e-commerce; Economic Growth; Rural Revitalization.

Introduction

Information technology innovation is changing rapidly in today's world, and the wave of information characterized by digitization, networking, and intelligence is flourishing. Global informationize has entered a new stage of comprehensive penetration, cross-border integration, accelerated innovation, and leading development. Thus, the study believes that county e-commerce can help realize rural revitalization and promote county economic development.

The report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China proposed implementing the strategy of revitalizing the countryside to adhere to the priority development of agriculture and rural areas. It proposes establishing and improving the institutional mechanism and policy system for integrated development of urban and rural areas under the general requirements of prosperous industry, ecological livability, civilized countryside, effective governance, affluent living, and accelerating the modernization of agriculture and rural areas (Xi, 2017). Focusing on implementing a rural revitalization strategy is the fundamental solution to crack the problems of agriculture and rural farmers and promote agricultural development, rural prosperity, and farmers' income. Xi Jinping, the President of the Republic of China, tries to fully implement strategic thought on poverty alleviation and development to the people of China (Xie & Wang, 2001). It aims to achieve the strategic goal of nationally targeted poverty alleviation. It carries an understanding of the importance of carrying out the targeted poverty alleviation work. It incorporates the sense of responsibility, innovation, and digital awareness development to develop the county e-commerce to contribute to economic growth and explore the practical path of the

county e-commerce for county economic development. Therefore, the study believes that county-level e-commerce could alleviate and enhance the sustainable development of the county economy and people's livelihood poverty.

Literature Review

Countries have different perceptions of the digital economy. The U.S Department of Commerce, had mentioned e-commerce, goods and digital delivery, and consumers in the digital context (Jiang, 2000). This step work in "The Digital Economy" has drawn our country's attention to electronic commerce and the information technology industry (Jiang, 1998). In comparison, the U.K considers the digital economy as a platform to provide globalization with digital network and communication infrastructure. It has enacted the digital economy law comprising games, electric entertainment, and electronic publishing in the scope of the digital economy. Furthermore, the Australian government argues that the development of the digital economy is a must for Australia to improve its international status, enhance the well-being of its citizens, and promote future economic development (Pang, Zhu, 2013).

As early as the 1990s, the World Economic Cooperation Organization took the lead in proposing the concept of the digital economy. The concept was introduced as the information economy shifted to the digital economy, in which the digital economy integrated more closely and more deeply with other industries. Due to the promotion and facilitation of the digital economy, human development has the atomic processing that transformed into information processing and handling process (Nicholas & Hu, 1995). Internationally, the digital economy refers more to digital applications, also called an information economy. The so-called information refers to everything related to information technology and digital technology that can transform the economy into a digital economy (Don & Chen, 1999). In China, the "G20 Initiative on Digital Economy Development and Cooperation" clarifies the concept of the digital economy, which refers to a series of economic activities using digital knowledge and information. It includes the critical factors of production, modern information networks as important carriers, and the effective use of information and communication technologies as an important driving force for efficiency improvement and economic structure optimization. (China, 2016)

The digital economy is a further practical result of internet thinking, driving the continuous evolution of economic forms, thus driving the vitality of social and economic entities and providing a broad network platform for reform, innovation, and development. It represents a new economic form, giving full play to the optimization and integration role of the internet in allocating social resources. It also profoundly integrates the internet's innovative achievements in various economic and social domains, enhancing the innovation and productivity of society and forming a new form of economic development with the internet as the infrastructure and realization tool more widely (Dai & Ni, 2020). The digital economy is a fundamental technical condition for developing the three rural areas as a new economic form. As of 2018, China's digital economy scale reached 31.3 trillion yuan. China's agricultural digital economy accounted for 7.3% of the national digital economy added value, the scale of the rural internet users reached 222 million people, and the rural internet penetration rate reached 38.4% (Chen, 2019). With the rapid increase in rural internet users, the digital economy is significant in developing agricultural and rural economies. As a driving force in the development of the digital economy, E-commerce is self-evidently crucial in promoting the development of the digital economy (Wang & Zhang, 2011).

Methodology

This paper mainly adopts the qualitative research method. The qualitative research method shows that county e-commerce has promoted consumption, government input, investment, and net export. This study understands the development status of e-commerce in each region from the survey. It organizes, compares, and analyzes the relevant information to provide basic information for

proposing a practical path to develop county e-commerce. The literature also strengthens it on the digital economy and rural revitalization of the local and abroad, where rural revitalization as an emerging strategy proposed by China has not been studied in-depth in this field. Therefore, this study investigates the effectiveness of county e-commerce standard features and ways to develop them in Haining and Muling.

The importance of the development of county-level e-commerce analysis

With the accelerated pace of modern life, people are increasingly recognized for the participatory and interactive e-commerce model with favorable prices and convenient shopping. Moreover, as the development of urban e-commerce business becomes more and more intense, businesses are beginning to focus on the rural e-commerce segment. At the same time, many scholars and government departments have also started to focus on researching this area, which is easy to see the vital role of developing county e-commerce for precise poverty alleviation.

Helping the poor to get good quality products at low prices

With the development of rural e-commerce, more and more farmers will participate in the wave of online shopping. The county e-commerce could reduce the cost of living and improve the villagers' happiness and well-being index, mainly in the following three areas: First, villagers can complete a series of services such as screening, purchase, home delivery, and after-sales service without leaving home. This process can save shopping time and solve the problem of going out to towns and cities to catch a bus, a long way to take the journey. Second, given China's economic development characteristics, many villages are located in remote areas due to traffic inconvenience. Most of the product prices are high, and the choice is small. The same product price is significantly higher than the city, which is lower than the income of the urban population. Undoubtedly, it is worse, and the emergence of e-commerce platforms effectively solves this problem. Villagers can combine their actual needs in the major e-commerce platform-independent choice, compare, increase product choice, and diversify the choice of space. At the same time, the platform as a third party for product quality after-sales service offers escort. High quality, preferential prices, significantly reducing the cost of living of villagers. Thirdly, good quality and cheap products are reflected in the villagers' daily necessities, and the cost of agricultural production materials has been effectively controlled. The sale of agricultural materials provides products, video explanation, and case sharing for farmers to understand the advantages of products. They proffer applicable crops, process guidance, insurance services to help farmers reduce risks and improve production to the maximum extent. In order to obtain a larger market, the major suppliers have carried out community group purchases, government endorsement subsidy activities, and provided farmers with quality products and services (Ali, 2016).

Helping the poor to increase their income

In every harvest season, the traditional sales of agricultural products gain many grain collectors. After collecting grain, it will be sold to manufacturers; however, the price is often low, farmers do not get high pay. This problem could be solved with rural e-commerce using the Taobao application. This application can characterize the pavilion for farmers to build online sales channels, where each county has to carry out the special agricultural products online. This online sales activity can be countered with the pink paragraph spike activities.(Lin,2016)

In this platform, farmers sell raw food and large-scale planting sales, which will give the added value of agricultural products and improve farmers' income growth. For example, the aggregation of the local agricultural products industry, Haining, gave full play to the advantages of e-commerce agricultural products. They achieved an online and offline turnover of 150 million yuan, a 30% increase year on year (China, 2015).

Therefore, the future of the county's e-commerce agricultural and sideline products can go through the brand record. Agricultural and sideline food export certification can realize China's agricultural and sideline products out of the country to achieve brand internationalization and get more users to achieve higher sales.(Hong,2015)

4.3 Drive the poor region to realize employment and entrepreneurship

Studies have shown that income disparity is increasing in developing countries. Here some scholars have proposed the concept of pro-poor growth, which the Asian Development Bank has defined as the need to allow the poor to grow their incomes above the average economic growth level. To narrow the gap between the rich and the poor, they need to be allowed to gain more from the process of economic growth. Increasing opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship is an effective way to make gains for the poor (Ruan,2008). The development of county-level e-commerce can effectively drive local employment and entrepreneurship. Making the county economy achieve rapid growth by bending the road has become an essential part of future economic growth (Kozubikova, Kotaskova & Dvorsky, 2019).

In promoting agricultural products to the market, farmers can participate in processing agricultural products; therefore, they do not have to leave their hometowns after the farming season. Local employment can be achieved, effectively solving the impact of population outflow on consumption and promoting investment for industrial upgrading (Zhang & Jiang, 2015).

As early as 2016, Muling County actively seized the opportunity of modern service industry. The government transferred a 2,500-square-meter government service center to a local human resources company at "zero rent" solving the employment of more than 500 people at one time, earning about 3,000-10,000 yuan, which is an excellent opportunity for local people to be able to work at home (Gao, 2019).

The young people bring vitality to the restaurant and entertainment industry in Muling County. Once again, this kind of business provides more jobs, effectively reducing the number of children left behind due to migrant workers. At the same time, based on the layout of the existing agricultural products industry cluster, the villagers of e-commerce businesses provide sufficient primary conditions: e-commerce course training, e-commerce operations guidance, logistics system security, financial policy support, production and processing conditions. This initiative can help prevent poverty early, and it is vital for poverty eradication (Liu,2010).

4.4. Developing county e-commerce is conducive to realizing rural revitalization

Since the 19th Party Congress report put forward the rural strategy, the country has been carrying out construction work around the five significant aspects of rural revitalization: prosperous industry, ecological livability, civilized countryside, effective governance, and affluent living. (Xi,2017). The development of county-level e-commerce can effectively drive the development of local industries and the economy. As an industry, the development of county electric business will improve road transportation, network resources, agricultural planting conditions, production lines, plant construction, park construction, talent introduction, project incubation, and logistics system construction. This will provide the necessary basic conditions for county economic development. At the same time, as the industry thrives, the employment and entrepreneurial opportunities brought about to increase (Zhang, 2010).

The development of the county e-commerce process will indirectly boost the production malls, logistics enterprises, financial services, and e-commerce platform service providers, which plays a vital role in shaping the regional economic brand and forming regional business cards. The new emerging business promotes the construction of rural civilization and develops the regional tourism economy. The development of rural tourism will inevitably bring about the development of other industries in the vicinity, which plays a role in promoting the development of the county's economic production and industrial upgrading. Through the construction of the county, e-commerce can make

the traditional agricultural system transformation and upgrading, but also for the modern service industry, production of deep processing field upgrade, prompting villagers to participate in the revitalization of the development of the home economy (Wang, Zhanng & Dong, 2014).

5. County e-commerce and economic growth

County-level e-commerce can accelerate industrial upgrading, effectively boost domestic demand growth and promote regional economic development. Gross domestic product (GDP) is an important core indicator to measure the national economy. In this paper, the expenditure method is selected in the GDP calculation method to analyze and discuss the mechanism of the role of county e-commerce on economic growth as follows;

$$Y = C + I + G + NX$$

Where,

Y represents a gross domestic product (GDP)

C represents consumption, i.e., expenditures on goods and services other than the purchase of new housing at the household

I represents an investment, i.e., the addition or renewal of capital assets (plant, machinery, inventory, etc.)

G represents government purchases, i.e., expenditures on goods and services purchased by all levels of government

N.X. stands for Net Exports, exports minus imports (Gao, 2018)

The role of resident consumption on the economy

With the rapid development of county e-commerce, the construction of logistics systems continues to improve, more convenient payment methods, more diverse products, services, and channels product selection, more diverse product categories, and at the same time to provide consumers with greater incentive to buy products (Liang, 2017). This will increase sales and the demand for people in many fields such as express delivery, warehousing, and e-commerce operations. The value of human resources is reflected in this process. As incomes rise, people's ability to pay is strengthened, business sales are increased, and business and consumers interact to promote and enhance economic growth (Xue, 2019).

The role of government consumption on the economy

Since 2015, China has proposed the "Internet+" strategy(Li,2015). The development of the e-commerce industry has been actively promoted from the national strategic level. So far, China has carried out nine batches of e-commerce demonstration counties. A total of 1607 counties have received exceptional funding support for rural e-commerce demonstration counties, with more than 20 billion yuan of national financial support(2015). Each local government matches the funding. Government support for the project has achieved comprehensive coverage of poor counties, providing the necessary financial guarantee and policy support to eliminate poverty. The government finances the transformation and upgrading of transportation, logistics, online stores, and e-commerce industrial parks to create a good business environment and promote consumption(Zhang, 2020).

The role of investment in the economy

Production and processing enterprises have entered the county to invest and build factories, expand production, provide jobs, establish related supporting facilities, and promote regional economic development in a limited way (Wang & Zhang, 2017). The development of county e-commerce will attract investment flow and county's economic development by introducing professional service teams to create county brands, forming a publicity effect, shaping county business cards, and driving the development of neighboring (Xu & Zhang & Liang & Wang, 2020)

The role of net exports on the economy

In 2020, China proposed accelerating the rapid development of cross-border e-commerce and other new business forms (Li, 2020). In 2021, China's import and export volume reached \$6.05 trillion, and the total value of China's trade in goods reached 39.1 trillion yuan in 2021, up 21.4 percent year on year (Li, 2022). Huqiu wedding dress, Wenzhou shoes, Zhuji socks, Henan Xuchang, Heze Juancheng wigs have achieved large-scale export products. In recent years, county products have gone abroad through cross-border e-commerce, showing an increasing trend year by year. By the end of 2019, the popularity of cross-border e-commerce among foreign trade enterprises in Xinjiang has increased by two percentage points compared with 2018, increasing to 19.75% (Wei & Xing, 2018). At the same time, various cross-border e-commerce platforms have emerged in Xinjiang, such as Xidanmen, Cemarket, Wild Cat, Mustang Mall, Zhongxing Silk Road, etc. (Hao, 2020). E-commerce can enable us to participate in the international market more effectively, such as the realization of buying the world and selling the world to obtain greater economic benefits.

The development of the county's effective path of e-commerce**Branding, developing sales channels**

A Chinese proverb mentions, "fragrant wine fears no dark alley". This proverb tells that quality goods are attractive and unique, thus needing no advertising because people know how to find them. Consumers may not yet know many good products. Now we have entered the era of mobile internet community marketing. Therefore, county e-commerce must use all available channels to cultivate regional public brands and carry out promotional activities, building 1+N-style public brands of the whole industrial chain, integrating tourism, cultural products, local specialties, and special products (Zhang & Wang, 2017).

Because of the low standardization of agricultural products and the inability to quickly gain consumers' trust, a government endorsement mechanism can be established, for example, by actively carrying out the brand filing, green food certification, and organic product certification for county brands. An agricultural product traceability and quality control system can be introduced, such as bar codes, Q.R. codes, RFID, cloud computing, and other technologies for collaborative management, so that products can be monitored and managed throughout the production line field the packaging (Tang, 2021).

In order to establish a well-known e-commerce platform, the marketing channels can cooperate with Taobao, Jingdong, Suning, and other domestic mainstream integrated e-commerce platforms to open a special pavilion and activities to achieve product sales quickly. This action is to enhance the platform's brand awareness. In this process, to fully exploit the regional characteristics of products, the establishment of special products single product platform, the self-built platform for investment could be assigned to the same single product around the convergence. Forming a single product portal achieves information interoperability, resource sharing, industry gathering, and shaping the county business card. The port counties can develop cross-border e-commerce businesses, where both will rely on third-party platforms. This platform is also considered a self-built platform, where the special product's branding could achieve the Chinese commodity brands overseas (Ren, Zhang, Ji, Cheng & Wang, 2021).

Strengthen government leadership and establish incentives

In order to make county e-commerce in an orderly manner, it is inevitable to get the local "hand" to pay great attention to the organization, planning, unified thinking of various departments in reaching a consensus. To do trust endorsement and give policy and financial support, the county government needs to introduce talent, financial support plans, supporting construction, incentive system, and other related documents. The ministries and departments should establish a detailed list of work tasks, a clear division of work, and the main responsibility body to effectively promote the county's e-commerce work (Yang & Li, 2017).

At the level of system construction, county governments need to coordinate planning to develop financial, market supervision, and other aspects of support policies. Actively promoting innovation in institutional mechanisms can break the barriers and bottlenecks that limit the development of e-commerce in rural areas and effectively integrate resources in the county. At the same time, extra incentives encourage enterprises and individuals to participate in the county's e-commerce work. A timely discovery such as mining, typical cultivation of e-commerce, and the county's development of new ideas can be replicated. By giving the role of leading enterprises to take the lead, the concentration of local industry-leading enterprises will provide a solid foundation for the rapid establishment of the county's e-commerce trading system. The pioneering role of leading enterprises will also promote the county's e-commerce trading platforms. The business integration develops the county internet economy diversification, e-commerce industry chain conducive and complement between industries. This formation of a benign and sustainable industrial ecological environment could enhance the county economy's rapid development (Wei & Shi, 2017).

Actively carry out e-commerce training

The development of county e-commerce must be adapted to local conditions. Rural areas are vast and sparse, logistics costs are high, it is not easy to develop e-commerce, and more importantly, there are no specialized talents, which is the biggest bottleneck in rural e-commerce.

County e-commerce is in the primary stage of development, and e-commerce must have the right talents to take root and blossom in the vast wilderness. In terms of choosing goods for online shopping, it is also essential to raise the awareness of the majority of farmers about the use of the internet so that local farmers can obtain quality products at reasonable prices through this channel. Carrying out rural e-commerce talent training can further develop rural e-commerce. More importantly, it can effectively solve the employment problem of the remaining rural labor force while driving the entrepreneurship of young people and pulling employment with entrepreneurship (Hong, 2016).

The practitioner and promoter of e-commerce in rural areas play a crucial role in developing e-commerce in the county. Through training, they will explore establishing a county e-commerce operation model that suits local economic development, build a complete county e-commerce ecosystem, and contribute to rural e-commerce.

E-commerce, as a new form of networked economic activity introduced into the rural market, has not been in contact with the internet. They have lower awareness of using the internet and using information. The lack of active integration and analysis of market information weakens farmers' ability to master the network market, thus causing a disconnect between farmers and urban residents, not enjoying the internet dividend. This has resulted in a disconnection between farmers and urban residents. The immediate solution to this problem is to let farmers learn to use the internet and use various e-commerce platforms and functions to enjoy the speed and benefits of e-commerce in several aspects, such as clothing, food, housing, transportation, shopping, and entertainment (Wang, 2017).

Agricultural e-commerce is changing the traditional way of agricultural trade, and the traditional trade model of "payment with one hand and delivery with the other" has been broken. Through agricultural e-commerce, farmers can complete credit, guarantee, transaction, payment, and

settlement very conveniently and quickly. They will get closer to the market, quickly understand consumers' preferences, purchasing habits, and requirements, and improve the agility and adaptability of production. At present, the proportion of county personnel engaged in e-commerce activities is still relatively small because most people do not conduct business transactions with the help of e-commerce platforms, and no system scale has been formed. The training course of "E-Commerce Operation" will assist in focusing on training a group of merchants, farmers, and entrepreneurs engaged in e-commerce. Thus, they will get the essential e-commerce operation ability and can carry out online marketing with the help of third-party platforms to realize the scale of e-commerce development, improve farmers' income, and promote the county's economy (Ma, 2021).

Conceptual Framework

This paper adopts a qualitative research method by reading the literature. For the development of the importance of county e-commerce analysis, summarize the development of county e-commerce path.

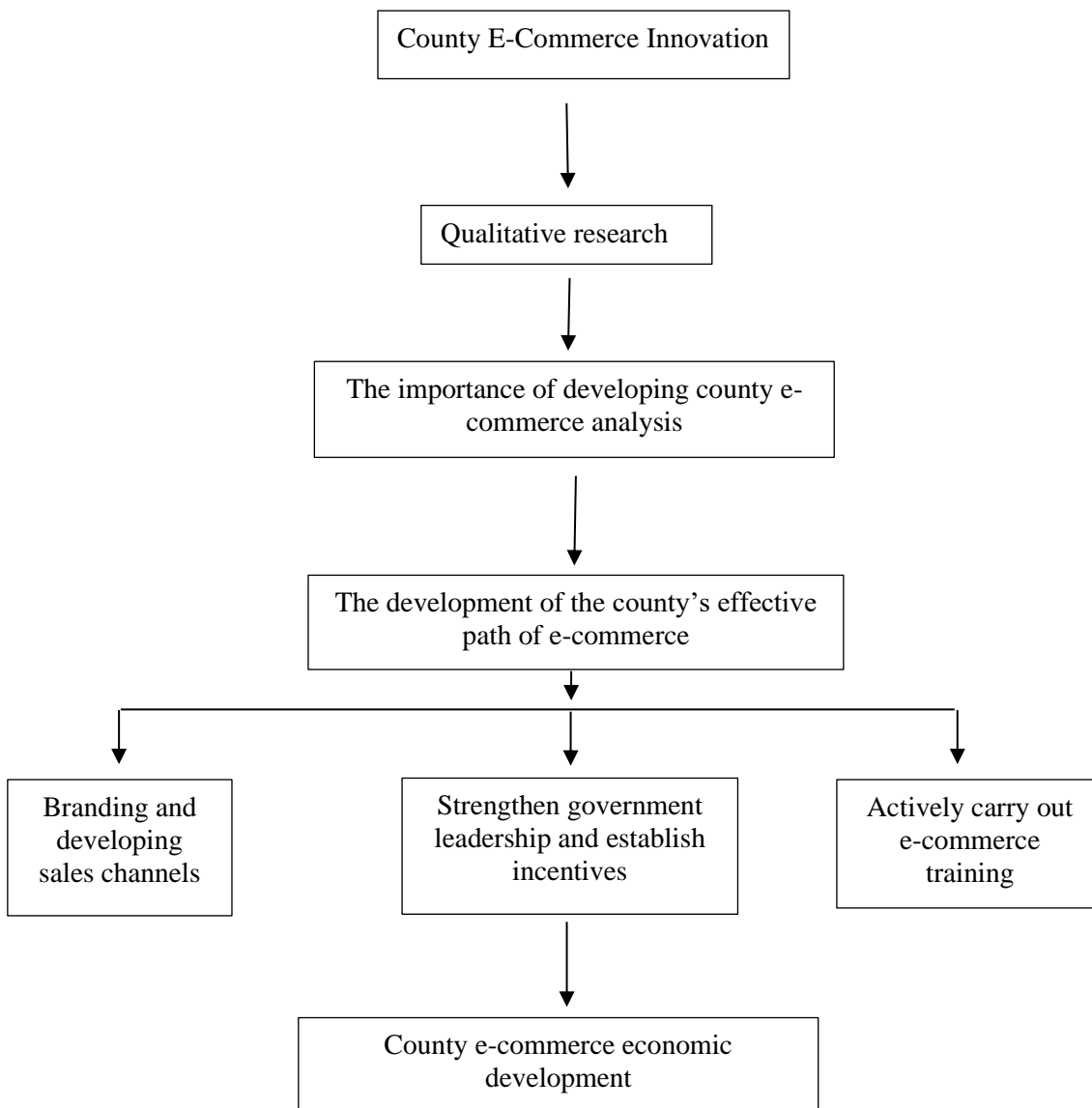


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of county e-commerce innovation economic development

Conclusion

This study analyzes that county e-commerce can effectively help poor people obtain excellent and inexpensive products through systematic research. It also helps them increase their income, enable employment, obtain entrepreneurship skills, and contribute to rural revitalization efforts. Moreover, county e-commerce can contribute to economic development through qualitative analysis in four aspects: residential consumption, government purchase, investment, and net export. Therefore, this study suggests that in the future, we need to establish the path of county e-commerce development in the following three aspects; namely, branding and opening up marketing channels, strengthening government leadership and establishing incentives, and actively carrying out e-commerce training. For simplicity, this study has developed a conceptual framework that portrays the path of county e-commerce in developing the nation as below.

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