Strategic Adjustment of Cross-Border Enterprises Under the Background of Anti-Globalization: A Case Study of TCL

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Abstract: In recent years, affected by the financial crisis and the imbalance of interests in the process of globalization, the problem of "anti-globalization" has become increasingly prominent, and Chinese cross-border enterprises have suffered a certain impact. Under the challenge of anti-globalization, TCL has implemented strategic adjustment in supply chain, R&D innovation, market expansion and other aspects. After the strategic adjustment, TCL achieved some results in terms of revenue, market share and supply chain stability. The comparison with Samsung in the same industry shows the uniqueness of TCL's strategic layout Therefore, it is concluded that in the tide of anti-globalization, cross-border enterprises must strengthen local operation, increase investment in technological innovation, and actively expand diversified markets. The purpose of this paper is to study the impact of anti-globalization on international trade, and to provide valuable experience and enlightenment for cross-border enterprises to reduce export risks, better plan development prospects,adjust development strategies and find coping strategies under the background of anti-globalization by using case analysis method and taking TCL, which is very influential in the global electronic information industry.

1 INTRODUCTION

In 1985, the concept of "globalization" was first proposed, the cross-border enterprise through integration of global resources, and practical development, exchanges and cooperation in international affairs. Play advantage, promoted the preferential configuration of resources and economic development, from all over the world become inevitable trend of economic globalization. In recent years, however, inverse globalization grew rapidly, specific performance for the economic crisis of 2008, 2016 British and trump to power off. Scholars generally believe that the manifestation of antiglobalization is the rise of trade protectionism, the increase of trade restriction measures of various countries and the intensification of geopolitical conflicts (Zhang & Liu, 2019). As a result, global foreign investment has declined sharply, and the fluctuation frequency of global trade volume has increased, and the growth rate has slowed down. The world is facing the increasingly severe global challenge of "anti-globalization". China has become the world's largest exporter in 2009. Export trade has become an important driving force for China's economic growth (Dai and Li, 2007). From the macro perspective, the strategic adjustment of cross-border enterprises is of great significance to the reshaping of the global economic order. Facing such a complex environment, if cross-border enterprises want to survive and develop in the tide of anti-globalization, they must re-examine and adjust their strategies to adapt to the trend of anti-globalization.

As for the theme of anti-globalization, many scholars have studied it from the aspects of national relations, national strategies and military affairs, but there are few relevant studies on cross-sea manufacturing enterprises. At the same time, the electronic information industry has special risks that are different from other industries in the process of globalization, which are mainly reflected in the risks of technology monopoly and blockade. For example, some developed countries restrict the export of high-end chip technology, which hinders the technological innovation and product research and development of relevant enterprises in other countries. Supply chain risk: the industrial supply chain is complex and highly internationalized, and the failure of any link may affect the whole supply chain.

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This study mainly uses the case study method to analyze TCL enterprise against the background of anti-globalization. The main reasons for choosing TCL as the research object are as follows: First, as a globally renowned cross-border enterprise in the electronics and information industry, TCL wields extensive influence worldwide. With sales and production facilities established across multiple regions and a vast global market, its high degree of internationalization makes it a typical case for studying challenges faced by multinational corporations under anti-globalization trends. Second, TCL has proactively implemented innovative strategic adjustments across multiple dimensions to counter anti-globalization pressures. These practices provide rich data and case materials for research, not only crucial for TCL's sustainable development but also offering valuable references for other cross-border enterprises, highlighting substantial real-world relevance.

2 CHINA'S FOREIGN TRADE CURRENT STATUS

2.1 Deceleration of Export Growth Rate

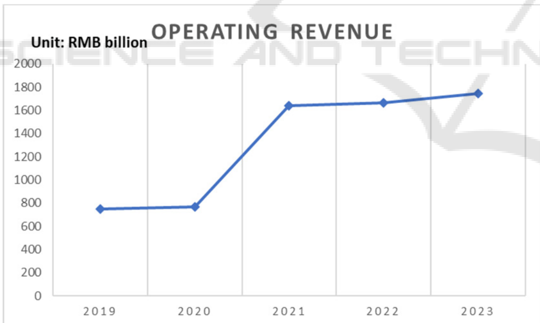

Figure 1 Changes in China's total export value and its year-on-year growth rate over the past 15 years (Picture credit: Original)

In recent years, China's foreign trade has consistently remained at a high level and maintained relative stability globally. As shown in figure 1, although China's total export volume exhibits an upward trend, the growth rate has shown a declining trajectory and significantly slowed due to factors such as sluggish global economic growth and the emergence of trade protectionism. Despite the substantial scale of China's exports, the growth rate struggles to return to previous levels under the anti-globalization environment.

2.2 Increase in Trade Barriers

The rise of anti-globalization sentiment has fueled trade protectionism. Prior to 2018, the average U.S. tariff on imported goods from China was only 3.1%. However, after President Trump imposed additional tariffs on various imported products, this figure surged to 19.3%. Some argue that following the implementation of an extra 10% tariff on Chinese goods on February 4, 2025, the average U.S. tariff level on Chinese products has approached 30% (China Economic Net, 2025). This has directly resulted in rising export costs for Chinese enterprises, diminished price competitiveness of their products, squeezed market share, and posed significant challenges to China's position as a global manufacturing hub.

2.3 Supply Chain Risks Increase

Geopolitical conflicts have deteriorated the global logistics environment,
causing disruptions in cross-border enterprises' supply chains. Key components face prolonged transportation times and unstable supply, which increases operational costs and management complexity while reducing capital turnover efficiency (Liu & Zhang, 2020).

2.4 Market Uncertainty Increases

The anti-globalization sentiment has reduced consumers' economic expectations and willingness to spend, leading to a contraction in market demand. Cross-border enterprises now face increased challenges in marketing and brand promotion within overseas markets, and their brand-building processes are hindered as a result (Zhao, 2019).

3 TCL'S STRATEGIC ADJUSTMENT MEASURES

3.1 Supply Chain Diversification

TCL has actively expanded its presence in key overseas markets by promoting supply chain localization. The company operates 46 R&D centers and 38 manufacturing bases across multiple countries, including Vietnam, India, Poland, and Mexico, with sales networks spanning more than 160 countries and regions (China Economic Net, 2025). This strategy has effectively reduced risks associated with tariff fluctuations and logistics disruptions while enabling swift responses to local market demands.

To expand the sources of raw materials and component suppliers, TCL has increased cooperation with suppliers in Southeast Asia while maintaining partnerships with traditional suppliers in Japan and South Korea. According to supply chain-related data in TCL's 2023 annual report (TCL Technology Group, 2024), the proportion of LCD panels procured from suppliers in India and Southeast Asia was approximately 15% in 2021. By 2022, this proportion rose to 22%, and by 2023, it further increased to 30%. This strategy has mitigated the adverse impacts of potential disruptions from relying on a single supplier.

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Some scholars argue that by building diversified supply chains, enterprises can reduce reliance on single suppliers and production regions, effectively address trade barriers and supply disruption risks, and enhance the resilience and stability of supply chains (Li & Qing, 2019).

3.2 Innovation in R&D Technology

An important motivation for internationalization is to acquire advanced knowledge from developed countries and utilize this knowledge to enhance the technology and innovation capabilities of the parent company (Fu, Sun, & Ghausi, 2018). TCL has established R&D centers in multiple locations worldwide, collaborating with local scientific research institutions and universities to research innovative technologies and develop smarter products that better align with consumer preferences in different regions.

Facing technological blockades, TCL has significantly increased its R&D investments. At the 2024 TCL Global Technology Innovation Conference, data revealed that the company's total R&D expenditure over the past six years has exceeded 60 billion yuan. In the field of artificial intelligence, TCL has developed an intelligent voice interaction system; in quantum dot technology, it has launched a series of quantum dot TV products. By securing multiple core technology patents, TCL has reduced reliance on external technologies and strengthened its product competitiveness.

3.3 Business Development and Market

In 2020, TCL acquired Zhonghuan Group, marking a significant step in the semiconductor industry and demonstrating its strategic intent to penetrate upstream industrial chains. The same year, TCL also acquired Samsung's LCD panel manufacturing plant in Suzhou, which would leverage Samsung Electronics' orders to expand its global panel exports. Additionally, TCL ventured into new business domains such as smart home technology. These strategies of market expansion and vertical integration help the company diversify market risks, explore new growth opportunities, and enhance its competitiveness in the global market (Wang & Huang, 2019).

4 STRATEGIC ADJUSTMENT RESULTS

Successful strategic adjustments can effectively enhance enterprises' risk resilience and international competitiveness, enabling them to achieve sustainable development in the context of anti-globalization (Wang & Huang, 2019).

4.1 Market Revenue Aspect

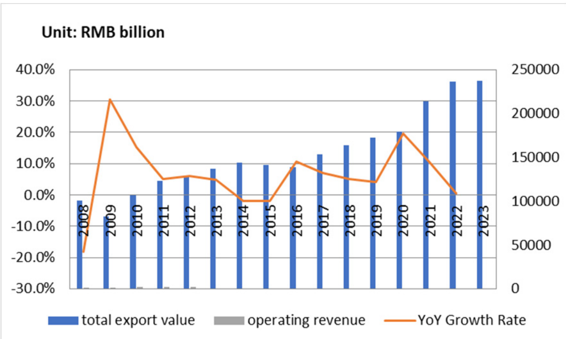

Figure 2 TCL Revenue (Picture credit: Original)

As shown in Figure 2, after a series of strategic adjustments, TCL's revenue began to steadily recover. According to TCL Technology's 2023 annual report, the company achieved operating revenue of 174.446 billion yuan, a year-on-year increase of 4.69%, net profit of 4.781 billion yuan, a year-on-year surge of 167.37%, and net profit attributable to shareholders of the listed company of 2.215 billion yuan, a remarkable growth of 747.60% (TCL Technology Group, 2024). These results demonstrate significant effectiveness.

4.2 Market Share Aspect

According to data from the internationally authoritative research institution Omdia, TCL TV secured the position of the world's second-largest brand with sales of 25.26 million units (Omdia, 2025). The brand's visibility continues to rise, and its vigorous expansion in overseas markets highlights strong risk resilience and competitive strength in the global marketplace.

4.3 Supply Chain Aspect

The diversification of the supply chain has significantly reduced component disruptions, transportation costs, and risks, while greatly improving the efficiency of production plan completion. This ensures the sustainable development of enterprises and enhances their responsiveness to market demands.

5 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF STRATEGIC ADJUSTMENTS AMONG PEER COMPANIES

Haier is committed to building a global brand and has established an integrated business strategy of "localized R&D, localized manufacturing, and localized marketing" (Li,2023). According to Haier Group's official website data, Haier has established 10 major R&D centers, 71 research institutes,35 industrial parks, and 163 manufacturing centers worldwide (Haier Group,2025). The company adheres to a customer-centric approach, creates high-end brand positioning, and implements product differentiation strategies in different countries and regions to achieve deep brand penetration (Li, 2023).

Huawei has long prioritized technological R&D as a strategic core. Even before establishing its own products, technologies, and brand, the company persistently invested in technological research. After generating profits, it intensified independent R&D efforts, gradually achieving technological breakthroughs and leadership, exemplified by HarmonyOS and 5G technology (Fu, Zhang, & Fu, 2023). Simultaneously, Huawei adopted a gradual internationalization path, first entering markets in Latin America and other developing countries, then advancing into Western Europe and North America, ultimately realizing a globalized layout (Fu, Zhang, & Fu, 2022).

Through comparison, it can be observed that TCL, Haier, and Huawei all pursue diversified development in their strategic adjustments without limiting themselves to single business lines; they emphasize supply chain diversification and actively expand overseas markets; they focus on technological R&D innovation to master core technologies and enhance product competitiveness. However, Haier places greater emphasis on building a global operational system and brand architecture; TCL prioritizes high energy efficiency and superior quality to penetrate international markets; Huawei leans toward technology-driven innovation to propel diversified growth. This comparative analysis provides valuable references for enterprises to learn from each other and optimize their strategic adjustments.

The inclusion of peer companies confronting anti-globalization challenges, like Haier and Huawei, as comparative cases. Case comparisons enable enterprises to learn from others' successful experiences or failure lessons, avoid repeating mistakes, and identify development paths suited to their own contexts.

6 CONCLUSIONS

Amid the anti-globalization backdrop, TCL successfully navigated challenges and carved out new growth opportunities through strategic adjustments including supply chain diversification, technological innovation in R&D, and market expansion. This case offers valuable lessons for other enterprises: In the face of reversing globalization trends, cross-border companies must strengthen localized operations by deeply understanding regional market demands and improving service quality; increase investment in technological innovation to master core technologies and enhance product competitiveness; actively explore diversified markets to mitigate risks and achieve sustainable development.

The main contributions of this study are as follows: first, it enriches research on corporate strategies under the unique context of anti-globalization, expanding the application of strategic management in complex international economic environments; second, it provides actionable insights for cross-border enterprises to adjust strategies in the context of anti-globalization through an in-depth analysis of TCL's strategic approaches; third, it offers a comparative analysis between TCL and its industry peer Haier, enabling enterprises to gain clearer perspectives for self-assessment and identify their strengths and weaknesses.

The limitation of this study lies in its reliance on a single case study of TCL. While TCL serves as a representative example, it may not fully capture the diverse challenges faced by cross-border enterprises under external environmental influences. Additionally, although some datah were incorporated, the depth and breadth of quantitative analysis remain insufficient in the overall research framework. Future research could focus on cross-border enterprises with varying scales and business focuses, incorporating more quantitative analyses and models to enhance scientific rigor and precision.

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