

Article

Compound Talent Demand and Cultivation Pathways for Cross-border E-commerce English Live Streaming in Dongguan's Knitwear Industry: A Person-Job Fit Perspective

Xinfei Liao ¹ and Xiaojuan Zeng ^{1,*}¹ College of Foreign Studies, Guangdong University of Science and Technology, Dongguan, China

* Correspondence: Xiaojuan Zeng, College of Foreign Studies, Guangdong University of Science and Technology, Dongguan, China

Abstract: The shortage of compound talents has become a core bottleneck restricting the development of cross-border English live streaming in Dalang Town, the Dongguan's knitwear industry. As "China's Woolen Sweater Town" and the "World Knitwear Capital", Dalang is accelerating its foreign trade digital transformation through international platforms such as TikTok to reach broader global markets. Grounded in the Person-Job Fit theory, this paper systematically analyzes contemporary job postings and comprehensively examines the competency requirements for cross-border English live streaming hosts in the knitwear industry from three critical dimensions: knowledge, skills, and competencies. The empirical study identifies four primary mismatches between current talent supply and actual job demand: knowledge misalignment, skill gaps, competency imbalance, and insufficient organizational fit. These critical discrepancies reflect a profound structural dilemma where "strong English proficiency \neq professional live streaming capability, strong live streaming capability \neq professional product expertise, professional product expertise \neq strong cross-border capability". Based on these comprehensive findings, the paper proposes strategic talent cultivation pathways from five interconnected perspectives: educational institutions, enterprises, industry associations, government bodies, and individual practitioners. The ultimate aim is to effectively cultivate highly skilled compound talents, bridge the existing competency gaps, and robustly support the high-quality global expansion and sustainable industrial upgrading of the traditional knitwear industry in the digital era.

Keywords: knitwear industry; e-commerce; live streaming; talent cultivation; person-job fit

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background

Driven by the digital economy, cross-border e-commerce has emerged as a pivotal force in stabilizing trade growth and fostering industrial upgrading within China's foreign trade sector [1]. The rapid expansion of platforms such as TikTok Shop and Amazon Live has transformed "cross-border English live streaming" from a supplementary marketing tool into a primary channel for achieving brand globalization and enhancing sales conversion. This innovative approach has enabled businesses to directly engage with international consumers, leveraging real-time interactions to build trust and drive purchasing decisions. As live-streaming e-commerce continues to evolve, its role in shaping global trade dynamics is becoming increasingly significant, underscoring the need for strategic adaptation by enterprises aiming to remain competitive in the digital era.

Dongguan's Dalang Town, recognized as the world's largest and most comprehensive knitwear industrial cluster, serves as a cornerstone of foreign trade and a vital contributor to the local economy [2]. While the knitwear industry has established a strong presence in domestic e-commerce and traditional cross-border trade, the adoption

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of cross-border English live streaming remains in its nascent stage, presenting substantial opportunities for growth. Recent initiatives in Dalang have focused on integrating digital trade into the knitwear sector, including the establishment of dedicated cross-border live streaming bases. These efforts aim to empower enterprises to penetrate overseas markets more effectively by utilizing English live streaming as a dynamic tool for global outreach and customer engagement. This transformation highlights the potential for digital innovation to revitalize traditional industries and expand their international footprint.

Aligned with China's 15th Five-Year Plan and Dongguan's 14th Five-Year Plan, Dalang's knitwear industry is poised to capitalize on the burgeoning opportunities presented by cross-border English live streaming. However, the sector faces a critical challenge in addressing the shortage of skilled talent [3]. Surveys have identified three primary barriers: individuals proficient in English often lack specialized knowledge of knitwear; those experienced in live streaming frequently lack cultural insights into overseas markets; and the availability of compound talents—professionals who combine expertise in language, live streaming, product categories, and cross-border trade—is exceedingly limited. Addressing these gaps requires targeted training programs and strategic talent development initiatives to cultivate a workforce capable of driving innovation and sustaining growth in this promising domain.

1.2. Research Significance

1.2.1. Theoretical Significance

The theoretical significance of this study is multifaceted. Firstly, it broadens the scope of Person-Job Fit theory by applying it to the unique intersection of traditional industries, cross-border live streaming, and English-speaking talent. This innovative approach shifts the focus from generic talent matching to a more specialized analysis within the knitwear industry, emphasizing the importance of scenario-specific research. Secondly, it contributes to the development of a robust theoretical framework for cultivating digital trade talent in Dongguan's specialized industries [4]. By addressing the gap in research on cross-border live streaming talent within the knitwear sector, this study provides valuable insights and theoretical guidance for the digital transformation of similar traditional industries, fostering sustainable growth and innovation in these sectors.

1.2.2. Practical Significance

This study offers practical insights for local institutions aiming to refine curricula in Business English, cross-border e-commerce, and related disciplines [5]. Existing programs often lack specialized modules tailored to the knitwear industry, which limits their effectiveness in addressing specific industry demands. By identifying essential job competencies, this research bridges the gap between talent cultivation and market requirements. Furthermore, the findings contribute to the digital globalization of Dongguan's knitwear sector through cross-border English live streaming, addressing the shortage of compound talents. This alignment enhances international competitiveness and supports the high-quality development of traditional manufacturing industries in the region.

2. Conceptual Framework and Theoretical Basis

2.1. Definition of Core Concepts

Cross-border English live streaming represents an innovative marketing model that leverages international platforms such as TikTok and Amazon Live. This approach employs English as the primary working language and targets overseas consumers for product demonstrations, interactive communication, and sales conversions. It necessitates that hosts possess advanced English oral proficiency, a deep understanding of the cultural habits of overseas consumers, and comprehensive knowledge of platform operation rules. This model seamlessly integrates language communication, product marketing, and cross-cultural interaction, making it a pivotal pathway for achieving brand globalization and facilitating the digital transformation of traditional export trade. By bridging

linguistic and cultural gaps, this model enables businesses to effectively engage with diverse consumer bases, thereby enhancing their global market presence and competitiveness [6].

Compound talents for Dongguan knitwear cross-border English live streaming are professionals who exhibit English proficiency as their foundational skill, complemented by cross-cultural communication abilities, specialized knowledge of knitwear products, and expertise in cross-border live streaming marketing. These individuals are capable of independently managing the entire process of knitwear-focused cross-border English live streaming. Their skill set includes the ability to use English fluently for product explanations, real-time interactions, and sales conversions. Additionally, they possess a nuanced understanding of the cultural habits and aesthetic preferences of overseas consumers, alongside in-depth knowledge of knitwear-specific attributes such as fabric types, production techniques, sizing standards, and care instructions [1]. Furthermore, they demonstrate advanced marketing capabilities, including user engagement and conversion strategies. The integration of these competencies—language proficiency, cultural awareness, product expertise, and marketing acumen—positions these talents as indispensable contributors to the high-quality development of Dalang's knitwear cross-border live streaming industry. Their role is critical in driving innovation and ensuring the sustainable growth of this emerging sector.

2.2. Theoretical Basis: Person-Job Fit Theory

Person-Job Fit theory, originally introduced in the early 20th century, serves as a cornerstone in the field of career guidance. This theory underscores the importance of aligning individual characteristics, such as skills, knowledge, and abilities, with the specific demands of a job [7]. By achieving this alignment, organizations can ensure that employees are well-suited for their roles, leading to enhanced job performance, greater satisfaction, and improved career stability. In the modern era, characterized by the rapid expansion of cross-border e-commerce and digital trade, this theoretical framework becomes particularly relevant. It provides valuable insights into identifying the competencies required for emerging roles and designing effective talent cultivation strategies to meet the evolving demands of these dynamic industries.

2.3. Literature Review

Under the rapid development of new business formats, there is a significant shortage of comprehensive and skilled talents for emerging trade models. This gap is particularly pronounced in areas such as cross-border e-commerce live streaming and overseas host roles. In the domain of cross-border e-commerce live streaming talent, existing research has primarily focused on analyzing generic competencies, including live streaming skills and platform operations. However, there is a noticeable lack of targeted studies addressing traditional vertical categories, such as knitwear. Similarly, in the field of Business English talent cultivation, the emphasis has predominantly been on language proficiency, with insufficient attention given to the integration of practical live streaming skills and industry-specific knowledge. In the context of the knitwear industry, research has largely concentrated on manufacturing processes and industrial transformation, leaving a void in systematic studies on cross-border live streaming talent development.

Taken together, the absence of systematic analysis in the compound scenario of "knitwear + cross-border live streaming + English talents" highlights a critical research gap. This study aims to address this gap by focusing on the current state of Dongguan's knitwear industry and the cultivation of compound talents for cross-border English live streaming [8]. By doing so, it seeks to contribute to the development of a digital trade talent system tailored to the specific needs of Dongguan's knitwear sector. The findings of this research are expected to provide valuable insights into the integration of industry knowledge, live streaming expertise, and language skills, thereby fostering a more robust and specialized talent pool for the region's evolving trade landscape.

3. Current Status of Dongguan's Knitwear Industry and Cross-Border English Live Streaming

3.1. Overview of Dalang's Knitwear Industry in Dongguan

Dongguan's Dalang Town is recognized as the world's largest knitwear production base, boasting over four decades of industrial development. This region has successfully established a comprehensive industrial chain encompassing spinning, knitting, dyeing, design, and sales. By 2025, Dalang hosts more than 28,000 knitwear enterprises, providing employment to over 200,000 individuals [7]. The annual production volume of knitwear garments in the area reaches 900 million pieces, with the total transaction value of the industrial chain surpassing 72 billion yuan. These impressive figures underscore the region's pivotal role in the global knitwear market and its capacity to sustain large-scale operations while meeting diverse consumer demands.

Dalang's knitwear industry is characterized by three core advantages that contribute to its global competitiveness. Firstly, the presence of a complete industrial chain ensures seamless coordination across raw material procurement, manufacturing, and logistics, enhancing operational efficiency. Secondly, the industry excels in handling small orders with quick response times, making it highly adaptable to the dynamic requirements of cross-border e-commerce. Thirdly, the significant cluster effects within the region foster economies of scale and cost advantages, further strengthening its market position. In recent years, Dalang has embraced digital transformation by developing digital service platforms tailored to the knitwear sector [9]. Additionally, the establishment of cross-border live streaming bases has facilitated the transition from traditional knitwear trade to digital commerce, enabling businesses to reach international markets more effectively and capitalize on emerging opportunities in the digital economy.

3.2. Current Application of Cross-Border English Live Streaming in Dongguan's Knitwear Industry

With the rapid expansion of overseas live streaming platforms such as TikTok, Dongguan knitwear enterprises have increasingly ventured into cross-border English live streaming to tap into international markets. In 2025, Dalang introduced the "Dalang Premium 2.0" central live streaming room system, marking a significant step toward exploring TikTok-based cross-border live streaming. This system represents a strategic effort to enhance the global visibility of Dongguan's knitwear products and establish a stronger foothold in the competitive international market. By leveraging the advanced features of TikTok, Dalang aims to create a more interactive and engaging shopping experience for global consumers, thereby boosting brand recognition and sales performance.

Despite these advancements, it is important to recognize that the current knitwear live streaming activities in Dalang are predominantly conducted on domestic platforms such as Douyin and Kuaishou, with cross-border English live streaming still in its nascent stages. Reports indicate that the "Dalang Premium 2.0" system primarily focuses on domestic audiences, with only a small fraction dedicated to cross-border live streaming [9]. The existing cross-border live streaming efforts exhibit three notable characteristics. First, TikTok Shop serves as the primary platform for these activities, offering a user-friendly interface and extensive reach. Second, the featured products mainly include autumn and winter sweaters, knit tops, and cashmere items, which align with seasonal demand in international markets. Third, the live streaming model predominantly involves store self-broadcasting, complemented by occasional collaborations with influencers to expand audience reach. However, significant challenges persist, including a severe shortage of compound talents skilled in both language and live streaming techniques, as well as low conversion efficiency in turning viewers into buyers. Addressing these issues will be critical for the sustainable growth of cross-border live streaming in the knitwear industry.

3.3. Existing Problems in the Cross-Border English Live Streaming Talent Pool

Dongguan's knitwear cross-border English live streaming compound talent pool encounters several significant challenges that hinder its effectiveness and growth. These challenges are multifaceted and require systematic attention to address the underlying issues comprehensively [10].

Insufficient English proficiency is a primary concern, particularly in oral communication and the use of specialized terminology. This limitation hampers the ability to accurately convey the unique attributes of knitwear products to international audiences. Additionally, a lack of in-depth knowledge about product categories, including fabric types, manufacturing techniques, sizing standards, and maintenance requirements, diminishes the credibility and appeal of live stream presentations. Weak live streaming skills further exacerbate the problem, as inadequate stage presence, ineffective audience engagement strategies, and poorly crafted conversion scripts reduce the overall impact of the sessions. Furthermore, the absence of cross-border competence, such as understanding cultural nuances and platform-specific regulations, restricts the ability to navigate international markets effectively.

This combination of deficiencies creates a structural imbalance where strong English proficiency does not necessarily equate to effective live streaming capabilities, and expertise in live streaming does not guarantee comprehensive product knowledge or cross-border competence. Without a systematic approach to talent cultivation, the severe shortage of compound professionals will continue to impede the development of the industry. Addressing these interconnected issues is essential for fostering a robust talent pool capable of driving sustainable growth in the cross-border knitwear live streaming sector.

4. Talent Demand and Supply-Demand Gap Analysis from the Person-Job Fit Perspective

4.1. Core Job Demand Analysis

English Host Job Requirements: To accurately capture the actual competency requirements for cross-border English live streaming positions in Dalang's knitwear industry, this study conducted a detailed statistical analysis of job postings from relevant enterprises in the Dongguan area. The research focused on two distinct groups: first, knitwear garment live streaming enterprises, selecting five knitwear manufacturers located in Dalang Town, including Nuolian Garments, Jiancheng Knitwear, and Jiayuanjie Textile; second, blind box and trendy toy live streaming enterprises, selecting seven companies conducting live streaming business in Dongguan, including Chihewánjiā, Heima Sports, and Qu Neng Wujie. To comprehensively understand the capability requirements for host recruitment positions, the study analyzed these two types of industries. The core competency dimensions and the proportion of employer requirements were summarized, with the results presented in Figure 1 and Figure 2. This analysis highlights the specific skills and attributes that employers prioritize, offering valuable insights into the evolving demands of the live streaming sector in these industries.

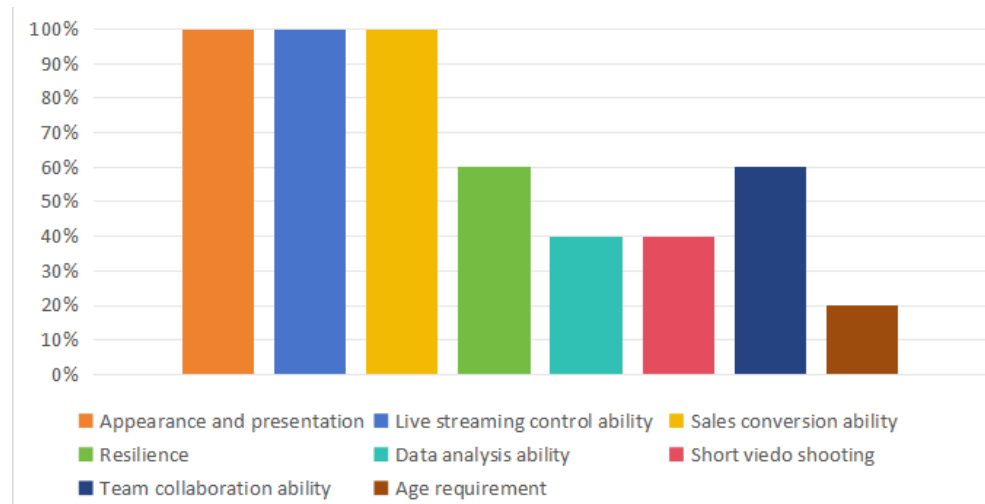


Figure 1. Capability Requirements for Domestic Hosts in the Industry

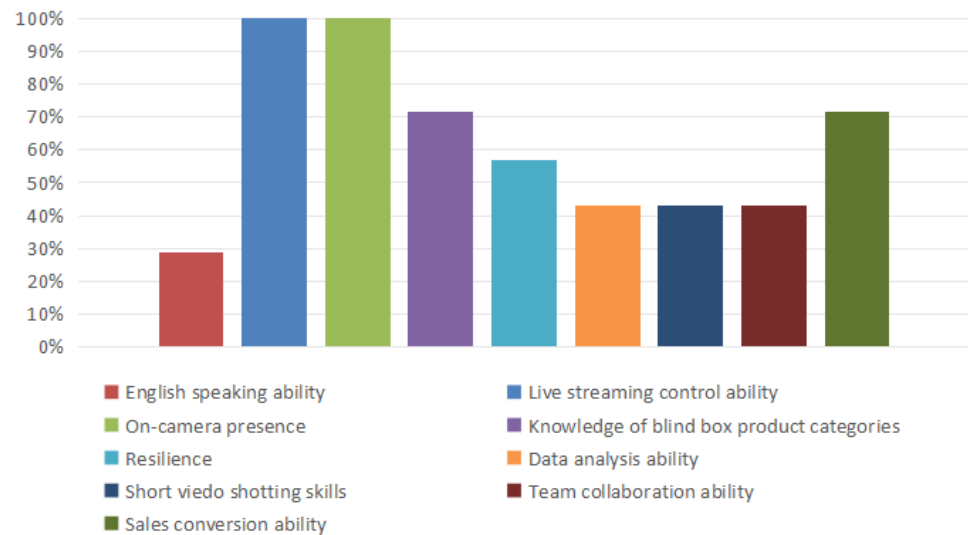


Figure 2. Capability Requirements for Cross-border Hosts in Dongguan's Collectible Industry

Integrating the competency requirements from both groups, the core capabilities required for cross-border hosts in Dongguan's knitwear industry are identified as follows: fluent English oral skills, knitwear product expertise, and cross-border live streaming stage control and conversion abilities [11]. These competencies are essential for ensuring effective communication with international audiences, demonstrating in-depth knowledge of knitwear products, and maintaining high levels of engagement during live streaming sessions. The ability to seamlessly manage the live streaming process, including audience interaction and sales conversion, is particularly critical in this context. These findings underscore the importance of a multifaceted skill set for hosts, reflecting the dynamic and competitive nature of the cross-border live streaming industry.

4.2. Summary of Talent Supply-Demand Gap

Through comparative analysis, several significant mismatches have been identified between talent supply and demand in Dalang's knitwear cross-border English live streaming sector. Firstly, there is a knowledge mismatch, as professionals with backgrounds in English or e-commerce often lack specialized knowledge of knitwear, while those from the knitwear industry tend to have limited proficiency in English. Secondly, a skill mismatch is evident, where language abilities, live streaming expertise, and operational competencies are not effectively integrated, leading to a deficiency in comprehensive skill sets. Thirdly, a competency mismatch exists, with practitioners

displaying notable weaknesses in career stability, stress management, cross-cultural understanding, and alignment with organizational needs. Lastly, there is a training mismatch, as university curricula fail to align with industry realities, enterprise training systems remain fragmented, and standardized frameworks across the industry are absent. These interconnected mismatches collectively hinder the development and optimization of Dalang's talent pool for knitwear cross-border English live streaming.

5. Current Problems in Talent Cultivation at College

Based on the identified job demands and supply-demand gaps, this section delves deeper into the primary challenges currently hindering talent cultivation. The development of compound talents for Dongguan's knitwear cross-border English live streaming industry is constrained by three critical levels: educational institutions, enterprises, and government or industry frameworks. These constraints collectively limit the ability to meet the evolving demands of the market and hinder the seamless integration of skills across these domains.

At the educational institution level, the curriculum systems remain overly generic, failing to incorporate knitwear-specific modules that align with industry needs. There is a significant disconnect between language training, live streaming techniques, and industry-specific knowledge, which hampers the holistic development of students. Teaching models are heavily theory-oriented, with insufficient emphasis on practical applications, particularly in authentic cross-border live streaming environments [1]. Furthermore, faculty members often lack hands-on industry experience, which limits their ability to provide relevant and up-to-date training. The teaching content also lags behind the rapid advancements in the industry, creating a gap between academic preparation and real-world requirements.

At the enterprise level, training practices are predominantly based on traditional apprenticeship models, which rely on fragmented, experience-based content. These methods lack standardized systems, leading to inconsistencies in skill development. Training cycles are often prolonged, lasting between three to six months, which imposes substantial costs on small and medium-sized enterprises. Additionally, high talent turnover rates discourage enterprises from investing deeply in training programs, perpetuating a vicious cycle of recruitment difficulties, reluctance to train, and challenges in retaining skilled employees. This cycle further exacerbates the talent shortage and undermines the overall growth of the industry [12].

At the government and industry level, the absence of unified talent standards and certification systems poses a significant challenge. Supporting services, such as public training bases, skills competitions, and talent pools, remain underdeveloped, limiting opportunities for systematic talent cultivation. Collaboration between universities and enterprises is often loose, with information asymmetry being a common issue. This lack of coordination hinders the establishment of effective mechanisms for collaborative talent development, further complicating efforts to align academic training with industry needs. Addressing these gaps is essential for fostering a robust talent pipeline that can support the industry's growth and innovation.

6. Compound Talent Cultivation Pathways Based on Person-Job Fit

6.1. Overall Approach

Guided by the principles of Person-Job Fit theory, this study emphasizes a structured and collaborative approach to talent cultivation. By adhering to the core principles of "job-oriented education, industry-education integration, stratified and categorized training, and dynamic alignment," a comprehensive five-party mechanism is proposed. This mechanism involves active participation from government bodies, universities, enterprises, industry associations, and individuals. Central to this framework is the "knowledge-skills-competencies" three-dimensional model, which ensures a precise alignment between the educational pathways and the specific demands of the job market.

This approach aims to address the critical shortage of compound talents in Dalang's knitwear cross-border English live streaming sector, fostering a workforce that is both versatile and industry-ready.

6.2. Government and Industry Levels: Platform Building, Standard Setting, Environment Optimization

Government and industry associations should assume guiding and supportive roles in fostering the development of knitwear cross-border live streaming talent. Collaboration with enterprises and universities is essential to establish comprehensive competency standards for Dalang Knitwear Cross-border English Live Streaming Talent. These standards should define tiered requirements for knowledge, skills, and competencies, serving as benchmarks for recruitment, training, and evaluation processes. Dedicated public training bases and talent repositories should be developed to provide free training programs, simulated live streaming sessions, and certification services, thereby reducing learning costs for both enterprises and individuals. Supportive policies, such as subsidies for talent training and live streaming bases, as well as awards for university-enterprise collaboration, should be introduced to incentivize internal training initiatives and attract skilled professionals to the industry [13, 14]. Furthermore, normalized university-enterprise collaboration alliances should be established to facilitate regular skills competitions, talent matching events, and industry forums. These initiatives will promote information sharing and resource exchange, creating a robust ecosystem for talent development and industry growth. Figures and tables illustrating these strategies can further enhance understanding and implementation.

6.3. University Level: Curriculum Restructuring and Industry-Education Integration

Universities should restructure their curricula to focus on four key competency modules: English, cross-cultural communication, knitwear expertise, and marketing strategies. Specialized courses should encompass areas such as Knitwear Professional English, Cross-border Live Streaming Scripting, TikTok Live Streaming Practice, Cross-cultural Communication, and Cross-border Marketing. This integration aims to provide students with a comprehensive skill set that bridges theoretical knowledge and practical application. Practical training initiatives, such as "bringing factories to campus" and establishing on-campus live streaming labs, should be implemented to facilitate project-based teaching, customized training classes, and internships. These measures will enable students to gain hands-on experience with authentic products, platforms, and processes. Faculty development should prioritize creating "dual-qualification" educators by offering practical training opportunities within enterprises and recruiting experienced frontline hosts and operations staff from industry to teach courses. This approach enhances the relevance and applicability of the curriculum. Additionally, the evaluation system should be reformed to adopt a holistic assessment method that combines theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and enterprise feedback. This system should emphasize students' proficiency in English oral communication, live streaming performance, product presentation, and marketing conversion capabilities, ensuring they are well-prepared for the demands of the modern industry.

6.4. Enterprise Level: Targeted Recruitment, Systematic Training, Career Development

In recruitment, enterprises should refine their person-job matching systems by integrating innovative methods such as simulated live streaming scenarios, trial work periods, and comprehensive cultural fit assessments. These approaches enable a thorough evaluation of candidates' professional competencies while ensuring alignment with organizational stability and values. For career development, it is essential to establish transparent promotion pathways that facilitate vertical advancement, including roles such as "host → senior host → live streaming team leader → operations supervisor." Additionally, creating compound role tracks, such as "host + operations" and "host + product selection," can significantly enhance practitioners' motivation, foster long-term

commitment, and cultivate a stronger sense of professional identity within the organization.

6.5. Individual Level: Self-Directed Learning and Continuous Improvement

Practitioners should prioritize continuous improvement across four critical dimensions: language, product expertise, skills, and competencies [4]. In terms of language, enhancing English oral fluency and mastering specialized knitwear terminology are essential for effective communication in professional contexts. Regarding product expertise, practitioners must systematically acquire knowledge about knitwear fabrics, techniques, sizing standards, care instructions, and other relevant product details to build a comprehensive understanding of the category. For skills, emphasis should be placed on refining practical abilities such as stage presence, audience interaction, effective conversion scripting, and thorough post-broadcast performance analysis. In the area of competencies, practitioners should actively familiarize themselves with cross-border platform regulations, logistics processes, payment systems, compliance standards, and cross-cultural communication strategies to excel in international live streaming environments. Furthermore, consistent data review and performance analysis are crucial for identifying areas of improvement and implementing iterative enhancements to optimize overall job performance and adaptability.

7. Conclusion

This paper, grounded in the Person-Job Fit theory, conducts a comprehensive analysis of the talent demand and cultivation strategies for cross-border English live streaming within the Dalang knitwear industry in Dongguan. The findings reveal that roles in this sector are inherently multifaceted, necessitating a blend of four critical competencies: proficiency in English application, adeptness in cross-cultural communication, in-depth knowledge of knitwear products, and expertise in live streaming marketing. Despite the growing demand for such integrated skill sets, the study identifies four significant mismatches between the current talent supply and job requirements: knowledge misalignment, skill deficiencies, competency disparities, and a lack of organizational compatibility. These challenges are attributed to the disconnect between university curricula and industry needs, the inadequacy of enterprise-level training programs, and insufficient support from both government and industry associations. To address these issues, the study proposes the establishment of a collaborative talent cultivation framework involving five key stakeholders: government, universities, enterprises, industry associations, and individuals. This approach not only aims to mitigate the talent shortage but also serves as a strategic reference for advancing the digital globalization of Dalang's knitwear industry. Furthermore, it provides valuable insights for fostering cross-border talent development in other county-level specialized industries across China, emphasizing the importance of aligning educational and training systems with evolving industry demands.

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