



# Siquian City's Exporting of Goods: Competitiveness and Survival Analysis Amidst Challenges

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## Authors' contributions

*This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Author CH designed the study, performed the analysis, wrote the protocol, and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Author WH managed the literature searches. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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## ABSTRACT

In 2020, in the face of the sudden impact of the new coronavirus pneumonia epidemic, Suqian's economy has withstood the test of the epidemic, showing a good situation of "rapid stabilization and gradual recovery", and the "13th Five-Year Plan" has come to a successful end. In the year of 2020, when the Sino-US trade war has not ended and the new coronavirus epidemic is raging, Suqian's foreign trade can achieve such good results, which is worthy of affirmation. However, while affirming that Suqian can still achieve such excellent results in the export of goods in such a severe situation at home and abroad, we should also see that there are still many shortcomings in the development of Suqian's foreign trade.

Based on this, this paper firstly analyzes the current situation of Suqian's goods export from four aspects, such as the scale of goods export, export goods, export trade mode and the export situation of goods in each sector. Secondly, the paper analyzes the existing problems of Suqian's export of goods. The main problems are: the gap between Suqian and southern Jiangsu, the unbalanced development of various sectors, the unreasonable structure of export of goods, etc.

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Thirdly, from the internal and external environment, this paper analyzes the reasons for these problems in Suqian's goods export. The internal reasons include: inter-regional industrial transfer, insufficient level of industrial development, and insufficient location advantage; The external reasons are as follows: the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic, Sino-US trade friction, sluggish international market demand, the impact of international industrial transfer and trade barriers have weakened the competitiveness of Suqian's export goods; Finally, from the two levels of government and enterprises to improve the problems of Suqian goods export countermeasures and conclusions.

*Keywords: Suqian; exports; export structure; forms of commerce.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Foreign trade is an important part of China's open economic development, one of the three carriages of economic development driven by the demand side, and an important driving force of national economic development. It has been more than 40 years since the reform and opening. In the past 40 years, China's foreign trade has made great achievements, its economy and society have achieved sustained, healthy, and high-speed development, and entered a new historical stage of development. In such an era, the development of the regional economy should involve more economic participation and make full use of both domestic and foreign markets in order to promote the development of the local economy.

Jiangsu is located in the eastern coastal area, with natural regional advantages. Since the implementation of the reform and opening up of the development strategy in China, Jiangsu has actively seized this historical opportunity to promote economic development, focusing on the development of an export-oriented economy and taking this as an opportunity to promote the economic development of the whole province. Especially since the 1990s, Jiangsu's foreign trade has made great progress. Its foreign trade level has been at the forefront of the country, and the degree of internationalization has been increasing. However, as far as the development of Jiangsu itself is concerned, its economic development is very unbalanced, and its foreign trade development also presents a stepwise development pattern of decreasing from south to north. According to its geographical location, Jiangsu can be divided into three parts: southern Jiangsu, central Jiangsu and northern Jiangsu. The development of southern Jiangsu is the best, followed by central Jiangsu, and northern Jiangsu is the most backward. As one of the five cities in North Jiangsu Province, Suqian's foreign trade development level is not only at the bottom of Jiangsu Province, but also relatively backward

compared with the other four cities in North Jiangsu Province. Therefore, although the reform and opening up have promoted the development of foreign trade in north Jiangsu, they have further widened the gap between it and southern Jiangsu, and seriously restricted the pace of Jiangsu's comprehensive well-off life and modernization.

In recent years, with the profound adjustment of the global economy, international market demand have been sluggish, the tide of anti-globalization is rising day by day, unilateralism and trade protectionism are on the rise, and due to deepening reform and expanding opening-up, China's reform has entered a period of overcoming difficulties and a deep-water zone, and the space for economic growth urgently needs to be expanded. In 2013, China proposed the Belt and Road Initiative (the New Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road) to strengthen interaction and cooperation between the East, the West and the East and raise the level of open economy in all regions. All regions in China should seize the opportunity and actively participate in the wave of the Belt and Road Initiative. As a node city of "the Belt and Road", Suqian is also adjacent to Lianyungang, which is the first node city of the new Eurasian Land Bridge economic corridor, the strategic fulcrum city of Jiangsu Belt and Road, and the strategic center city of Jiangsu coastal development. 2Since the "One Belt and One Road" strategy was put forward, Suqian has taken advantage of various favorable conditions to actively participate in international economics and trade, and its foreign trade has grown rapidly. However, compared with other regions in Suqian province, there is still a big gap. This paper collects the relevant data on goods export in Suqian city in recent years, tries to analyze the development status of goods export in Suqian city in recent years in order to find out the existing problems of goods export in Suqian city, and tries to put forward countermeasures and suggestions to solve such problems.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

As for the foreign trade and economy, the relevant foreign research contents mainly include:

From the prevalence of mercantilism in the 16th to 17th centuries, international trade theory has been developing. After entering the 21st century, the international trade theory into the era of "new new trade theory", people on the basis of the new trade theory, the research perspective to the allocation of resources between industry, and even the internal allocation of resources, and in which, more representative of meriz (Melitz) "heterogeneous enterprise model", "Antras" internalization theory and then Helpman of the first two theory.

### 2.1 The Relationship between Foreign Trade and Economic Growth

The development of foreign trade plays a great role in driving and promoting the economic growth. Feder (1978) established a model to show that export trade has strong external effects" [1]. GE. Helpman (1990) believes that foreign trade can optimize the allocation of factors between domestic resources and material production sectors, thus promoting economic growth [2]. Grossman (1989) believes that foreign trade makes economic activities more transparent and uses resources to production activities to promote economic growth [3]. David H McCormick (2007) believes that trade opening can improve the domestic investment rate, promote the formation of capital, and relieve the pressure of capital needed for local economic growth [4].

### 2.2 The Diffusion of International Technology in Foreign Trade

Deng.H.L. And Rong.W.D. (2004) In the existence of "threshold effect" in the promoting effect of foreign trade on economic growth, foreign trade promotes economic growth by affecting technological progress [5]. Cui s L (2004) found that the import of high-tech products had a great spillover effect on the technology imitation and innovation of developing countries [6]. Huang J Z (2004) studied foreign trade to promote technological progress and improve total factor productivity, that is, international technology diffusion" [7]. IRodrjk D (2006) believes that the economically less developed countries (or regions) can imitate, introduce and innovate the economically

developed countries (or regions) in the process of foreign trade, so as to achieve the catch-up of technology and economic level [8].

### 2.3 International competitiveness of industries in foreign trade

Alcala F And Ciccone A (2004) proposed that industrial international competitiveness Under international free trade conditions, a country (or region) specific industry has higher productivity than other countries (or regions), thus the ability to achieve profitability [9]. Balassa B (2005) believes that the formation of specific industries in a country (or region) is influenced by production factors, market demand and structure, supporting industries, and enterprise competition strategies, etc [10]. Feder Alex (2006) proposed that foreign trade promotes the optimal allocation of domestic resources between the material production sector and the production sector of knowledge product elements, so as to improve the international competitiveness of local industries [11].

### 2.4 Human Capital Development in Foreign Trade

Feenstra R (2003) proposed that the differences in human capital endowment among countries are strengthened through international trade, which contributes to the economic growth of countries with more abundant human capital endowment [12]. Goldberg S And Klein W (1999) believe that human capital directly affects both domestic technological innovation and the ability to learn on the other hand from abroad [13]. Harrison A (2000) believes that in the process of foreign trade, the effect of technology transfer in less developed countries (or regions) is not obvious, mainly due to the lack of sufficient absorption and innovation of local human capital [14]. Keller W (2002) When the accumulation of human capital in a country (or region) matches the technological transformation, the growth effect brought by foreign trade can be produced [15].

#### 2.4.1 Domestic research dynamics

Domestic scholars focus more on the contribution of foreign trade to the perspective of developing countries, and correspond to the practice of foreign trade, especially on the economic growth of the region. At present, the domestic research on foreign trade mainly has the following aspects:

#### **2.4.2 The impact of foreign trade on economic growth**

Hao Yan (2007) believes that the expansion of import will bring about the upgrading of industrial structure, and guide the gradual transfer of production factors from low-efficiency industries to efficient industries, and then promote the optimization of economic structure and the improvement of factor efficiency, so as to promote the continuous growth of the whole national economy [16].

#### **2.4.3 Countermeasures for foreign trade development under the US financial crisis**

Yin Jianyong (2008) put forward that under the impact of the financial crisis, it is necessary to scientifically understand and correctly understand the changes of the domestic and foreign environment, accurately find the breakthrough, effectively promote the transformation of foreign trade growth mode, and promote the transformation of foreign trade export from quantity to quality and efficiency [17]. Li Mingfu (2009) proposed that all foreign trade enterprises must establish a correct risk awareness, strengthen the analysis of the market environment and changes, rationally use financial means to avoid import and export risks, and improve the ability to prevent and adapt to external risks in an all-round way [18]. Qiu Weiqian (2012) believes that in the face of the impact of the financial crisis, China should effectively increase the strength of local industry associations and effectively use the dispute settlement mechanism stipulated by the WTO to solve international trade disputes [19].

#### **2.4.4 Industrial upgrading and optimization**

Sukewu (2011) proposed to further strengthen the construction of industrial agglomeration area, give play to the function of agglomeration and cooperation of enterprises in industrial clusters, realize the effect of scale economy and then promote the optimization of industrial structure [20]. Zhang Hongjie (2010) believes that in the "post-crisis" era, the two major themes of promoting economic development are the optimization of industrial structure and the transformation of development mode, which are also the basic factors affecting the structure and efficiency of foreign trade [21]. Yang Fang (2011) believes that it is necessary to continue to

expand the scale of foreign capital utilization by using foreign capital to solve the technical and capital problems of expanding reproduction, so as to meet the needs of industrial structure transformation [22].

#### **2.4.5 Transformation in the development mode of foreign trade**

Dian-min liu (2010) pointed out that the transformation of the pattern of foreign trade development involves system, structure and economic growth mechanism, from local resource conditions, regional characteristics and industry conditions, strengthen the comprehensive planning accurate guidance, highlight the strategic focus, joint arouse the enthusiasm of all aspects, and to promote the transformation of the pattern of foreign trade development [23]. Liang Dan (2010) believes that all government departments should change their views and practices of over-relying on foreign investment attraction and technology introduction, and pay more attention to the technological progress and industrial upgrading of local enterprises, and cultivate the independent innovation ability of local enterprises [24]. Ma Xiaoli (2012) proposed that to improve the competitiveness of foreign trade, we should not only continuously expand the scale of foreign trade, but also further change the development mode of foreign trade. We must find the breakthrough point of foreign trade development from the three aspects of industry, products and enterprises [25].

#### **2.4.6 The development of processing trade under the industrial transfer**

Zhang Xiaomei (2010) believes that "OEM production" enterprises pay physical costs, while brand holders pay only intangible assets. Compared with the two, production enterprises face more and greater market risks, while brand holders occupy a larger profit space [26]. Lin Juan, Zhang Ji, Zhou Xudong (2012) proposed to speed up the construction of export processing zones for high-tech industries and provide a platform for the transfer and undertaking of foreign high-tech industries [27]. Zhang Yongsheng (2008) believes that through the extension of the industrial chain, the local procurement proportion of processing enterprises should be continuously increased, so as to play the radiation driving effect and promote the improvement of the added value of products [28].

### 2.4.7 Development of trade in services

Song Xiaoshu (2011) believes that in the continuous development and progress of trade in goods, the great opportunities for the development of service trade are contained in them. Service trade is bound to become a new growth point of foreign trade, and the opening field of service trade should be continuously expanded [29]. Lu Yi (2009) believes that service outsourcing does not rely on transportation, and does not cause time difference, transport distance and other costs, which can effectively alleviate the disadvantage of inland geographical location [30].

To sum up, it can be found that the current research on foreign trade can be said to be both comprehensive and in-depth, both from the national perspective and specific provinces and cities as the research object, and the research perspectives and methods are also diversified and in-depth. However, the existing research results few Suqian foreign trade as the breakthrough point research, the research of central city like Suqian how to effectively use their own comparative advantages and backwardness advantage to develop the analysis of foreign trade development space, in the central region dynamic comparative advantage and resource advantage into economic advantage still has improvement.

## 3. BASIC IDEAS AND METHODS OF RESEARCH

This paper mainly studies the current situation of Suqian's export, including the achievements in foreign trade, existing problems and the analysis of these reasons. This paper focuses on the problems existing in the foreign trade and export and the causes of these problems, so as to put forward some feasible countermeasures and programs.

The research methods adopted in this paper mainly include:

- 1) Literature analysis method through the careful reading, classification, analysis and comparison of domestic and foreign foreign trade books and literature, and understand the development state of this kind of topic, and on this basis to form the research direction of this paper;
- 2) Data analysis method through the Suqian Statistical Yearbook, Jiangsu Province

statistical Yearbook, more detailed, in-depth understanding of the current situation of Suqian's foreign trade;

General analysis and individual analysis method since the reform and opening up, China's economy after the eastern coastal opening and the western development, has formed the general law of foreign trade development, especially the "Belt and Road" strategy and "difference" development plan is put forward, China's foreign trade will achieve further development. This paper combines general analysis with individual analysis, and focuses on the current situation and development of Suqian goods export under the guidance of the general law.

## 3.1 The Current Situation of Goods Export in Suqian City

### 3.1.1 Analysis of goods export scale

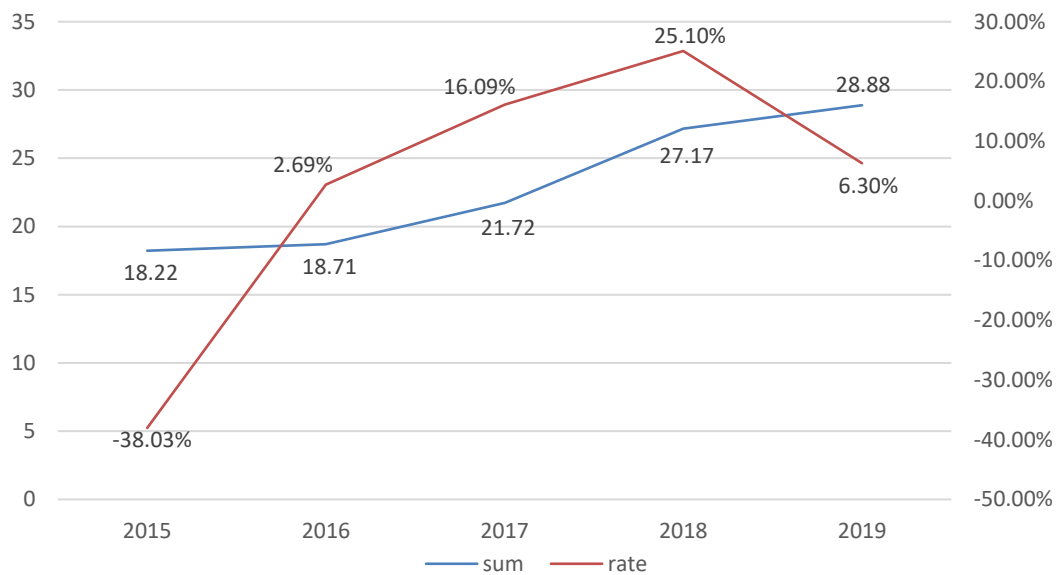
As shown in Fig. 1, the total export of goods in Suqian showed an overall upward trend from 2015 to 2019, and the growth rate was accelerating from 2015 to 2018. However, from 2018 to 2019, the growth rate of the export value of goods declined for the first time, from 25.10% in 2018 to 6.30% in 2019. But at the same time, when we see the decline in the growth rate of export, we should also consider that in 2019, the Sino-US trade war broke out, which had a huge impact on the development of China's foreign trade, and the export of goods is facing great challenges. However, Suqian can still maintain a growth rate of 6.3% in such a severe and complex international situation. It shows that Suqian's export of goods still has great resilience. While the Sino-US trade negotiations continue to make progress, it can be predicted that the export of goods in Suqian will get better development, and the export growth rate will also increase again.

As shown in Table 1, the export volume of 13 cities in Jiangsu Province has maintained a good growth trend in the past ten years. In terms of goods exported value, Suzhou has always ranked first in 2009 and 2019, while Suqian has been at the bottom in this decade. However, in terms of annual average growth rate, Suqian's annual average growth rate of goods export is second only to that of Xuzhou, ranking second in the province. This shows that although the total amount of goods exported in Suqian is still in a very backward position compared with other

cities in the province, the export of goods in Suqian has a strong momentum of development and a lot of space for development.

Summary: In the past few years, the export value of goods in Suqian has maintained a good growth trend, and its average growth rate in the past ten years ranks the second in the province, although the export value of goods in Suqian is still in a very backward position compared with other cities in the province. However, judging

from the outbreak of Sino-US trade frictions in 2018, the export of goods in Suqian still achieved a 6.30% growth rate, which shows that although the export of goods in Suqian has been impacted to a certain extent, it still has strong vitality. As the Sino-US trade war negotiations continue to make progress, it is foreseeable that Suqian's exports of goods will always maintain a stable and high-speed growth. The gap with other cities in the province will also gradually narrow.



**Fig. 1. Export volume and growth rate of Suqian goods from 2015 to 2019**  
 Note: The data in this figure is collated from the Suqian Statistical Yearbook 2020

**Table 1. Comparison of export of goods by cities in Jiangsu Province in 2009 and 2019**

Serial No.	Time Town	2009		2019		
		Amount of exports	Ranking	Amount of exports	Ranking	Growth rate per annum
1	Suzhou	1140.87	1	1920.40	1	6.0%
2	Wuxi	259.87	2	554.60	2	8.8%
3	Nankin	184.59	3	435.33	3	10.0%
4	Changzhou	108.62	5	252.41	4	9.8%
5	Nantong	111.75	4	248.90	5	9.3%
6	Xuzhou	15.15	11	112.88	6	25.0%
7	Taizhou	42.14	6	95.32	7	9.5%
8	Yangzhou	40.13	7	83.65	8	8.5%
9	Zhenjiang	35.41	8	78.67	9	9.3%
10	Yancheng	18.64	10	64.12	10	14.7%
11	Lianyungang	19.50	9	38.89	11	8.0%
12	Huai'an	10.41	12	33.80	12	14.0%
13	Suqian	5.35	13	28.88	13	20.6%

Note: The table data are collected from Jiangsu Statistical Yearbook 20204

### 3.1.2 Analysis of export goods

In the face of a severe and complex economic situation at home and abroad and the impact of COVID-19, the export of goods in Suqian city in 2020 will be significantly better than expected and continue to recover rapidly and steadily, bringing a successful end to the "13th Five-Year Plan" foreign trade. 6As shown in Table 2, Suqian's export of goods in 2020 is mainly mechanical and electrical products and high-tech products. The export value of mechanical and electrical products and high-tech products accounts for 74.00% of the city's total export value of goods in the whole year. In addition, Suqian exported 4.7 billion yuan of plastic products in 2020, up 44.8%, accounting for 16.23% of the city's export value, and 670 million yuan of plywood and multi-layer similar boards, down 22.4%, accounting for 2.3% of the city's export value. This shows that Suqian has made good progress in the transformation of the structure of goods export, and mechanical and electrical products and high-tech products have become the supporting products of Suqian's goods export.

### 3.1.3 Analysis of export trade mode

As shown in Table 3, from the perspective of trade mode, among the goods exported by Suqian in 2020, the export value of goods exported by general trade accounted for more than 90% of the total export value of the city, and achieved an increase of nearly 50% compared with the previous year. Meanwhile, the export value of goods exported by processing trade was 2.08 billion yuan. At the same time, the export value of goods exported by processing trade only accounted for 6.3% of the total export value of goods in the whole year, and compared with last year, the export value of goods exported by processing trade in Suqian in 2020 showed negative growth. Among them, the decline in the growth rate of the export value of goods exported by processing trade has a great relationship with the outbreak of COVID-19 at the end of 2019. However, under the impact of COVID-19, the export value of goods exported through processing trade in Suqian only decreased by 0.3%. This shows that the processing trade of Suqian has good resilience. With the continuous control of COVID-19 in the world and the promotion of the normalization of epidemic prevention and control in China, the export value of goods exported by processing trade in Suqian is bound to achieve positive growth. In 2021,

China's economic development will step into the "14th Five-Year Plan" development stage. In the new economic development stage, the processing trade of Suqian will achieve further development, and the trade mode of goods export will be constantly optimized.

### 3.1.4 Export of goods in each sector

As shown in Fig. 2, there is a large gap between the export value of goods among counties and districts in Suqian City in 2019. The export value of goods in Suqian City (including Suyu District and Sucheng District) accounted for 47% or nearly half, of the total export value of goods in Suqian city in 2019. Shuyang County takes second place with 29%. Siyang County and Sihong County accounted for the smallest proportion, 15% and 9%, respectively. One of the reasons for such a large gap in the export value of goods among sectors in Suqian city is the number of economic development zones owned by each sector. Among them, Suqian city has four development zones: Suqian Economic and Technological Development Zone, Suzhou Suqian Industrial Park, Sucheng Economic Development Zone and Suqian High-tech Industrial Development Zone, while Shuyang County, Siyang County and Sihong County only have one development zone respectively.

## 3.2 Problems of Goods Export in Suqian City

### 3.2.1 There is a big gap with south Jiangsu and Central Jiangsu

There are obvious regional differences in the development of Jiangsu's open economy, which show three gradient levels from south to north. Among them, because of its superior location conditions, the exports of southern Jiangsu have always occupied a large proportion of the foreign trade exports of Jiangsu Province, which is an important pillar of the development of Jiangsu's open economy. At the same time, in order to promote the coordinated development of various regions in Jiangsu province, Jiangsu Province has also introduced a series of measures to promote the coordinated development of various regions in Jiangsu Province. One is to let the cities with better economic development in southern Jiangsu and central Jiangsu help the cities with worse development in central Jiangsu and northern Jiangsu. To promote the economic development of the regions with better economic development in the south and central Jiangsu,

**Table 2. Main export goods of Suqian in 2020**

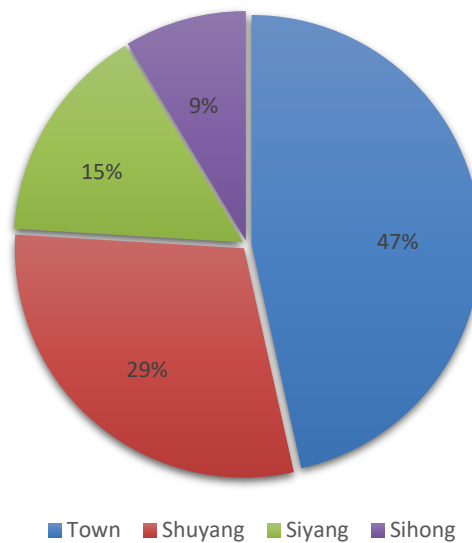
Classification of exported Goods	Absolute number (100 millionyuan)	Year-on-year increase (%)	Percentage (%)
Mechanical and electrical products	119	222	41.10
High and new Technology products	95.3	415.6	32.90
Plastic products	47	44.8	16.23
Plywood and multilayer similar boards	6.7	-22.4	2.3

Note: The data in this table are collated from Suqian (release date: 2021-01-27)5

**Table 3. Suqian goods export trade mode**

Mode of trade	Amount (100 million yuan)	Increase over last year (%)	Percentage (%)
General trade	311.6	44.9	93.7
Processing trade	20.8	-0.3	6.3

Note: Table data collected from Suqian website (release date: 2021-01-27)7



**Fig. 2. Proportion of goods export value by sector in Suqian in 2019**

Note: The data of sector statistics are collected from Suqian Statistical Yearbook 2020

while promoting the economic development of the regions with worse economic development in the central and northern Jiangsu. For example, Suzhou is the supporting city of Suqian. Suzhou promotes Suqian's economic development by cooperating with Suqian to establish economic development zones and open branch factories, so as to promote Suqian's export of goods. However, because Suqian is located in the north of Jiangsu Province, its geographical position is somewhat marginalized compared with the various areas in southern and central Jiangsu Province. Meanwhile, due to the limited radiation scope of the Yangtze River Delta Economic Zone, its radiation and driving effects are weak. Compared with the Yangtze River Delta Economic Zone, the open economic

development of Huaihai Economic Zone is in a backward state both in terms of speed and quality. Therefore, although Suqian has the help of Suzhou, there is still a big gap between the development of its goods exports and that of other cities in Jiangsu province. This difference can be seen from the development trend of total import and export volume in Jiangsu cities in Table 4.

According to the horizontal comparison of data in Table 4, from 2017 to 2019, the export value of goods in Suqian has been growing. Combined with the data in Table 1 and Fig. 1, it can be seen that Suqian has achieved good results in the export of goods in the past few years, and the growth rate is also at the forefront of the



**Table 4. Total import and export volume of Jiangsu cities from 2017 to 2019**

Item Year City	Total imports and exports (US \$100million)			Exports (USD billion)			Imports (\$billion)		
	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019
Nanjing	611.87	654.91	699.60	344.15	378.79	435.33	267.73	276.12	264.27
Wuxi	812.53	934.44	924.30	495.19	567.81	554.60	317.34	366.63	369.70
Xuzhou	78.01	117.44	135.19	63.34	97.08	112.88	14.66	20.36	22.31
Changzhou	312.66	343.86	338.35	229.39	250.72	252.41	83.27	93.14	85.94
Suzhou	3160.79	3541.14	3190.90	1871.61	2068.31	1920.40	1289.18	1472.83	1270.50
Nantong	348.20	385.91	365.71	249.38	254.53	248.90	98.92	131.38	116.82
Lianyungang	82.11	95.47	93.22	39.07	41.59	38.89	43.03	53.88	54.34
Huai'an	46.36	50.10	47.05	30.03	33.67	33.80	16.33	16.43	13.25
Yancheng	86.53	95.49	96.12	58.41	60.31	64.12	28.12	35.19	32.00
Yangzhou	107.99	119.93	113.05	78.68	85.42	83.65	29.32	34.51	29.40
Zhenjiang	105.36	118.39	112.03	69.85	79.80	78.67	35.51	38.59	33.35
Taizho	129.48	147.30	144.66	82.16	95.31	95.32	47.32	51.99	49.34
Suqian	29.48	36.01	34.25	21.72	27.17	28.88	7.76	8.84	5.38

Note: The data in this table are collected from Jiangsu Statistical Yearbook 2020

province. However, if a vertical comparison is made, it can be found that the proportion of 6.7% in 2018 and 7.3% in 2019 respectively. Although the proportion has increased, it is still very small, which is a weak link in the development of goods in Jiangsu Province. Compared with southern and northern Jiangsu, there is also a large gap. In terms of the five cities in northern Jiangsu, Suqian's goods export is still in a relatively weak link, and there is a huge space for the increase of goods export

### 3.2.2 Unbalanced development of various sectors

As shown in Fig. 2, there is a large gap between the export value of goods from various sectors in Suqian in 2019. The export value of goods in Suqian urban area (including Suyu District and Sucheng District) accounted for 47% of the total export value of goods in the whole year, nearly half, while the export value of goods in Sihong County only accounted for 9% of the total export value of goods in the whole year. The export value of goods in Siyang was slightly better than that in Sihong, accounting for 15% of the total export value of goods in the whole year.

### 3.2.3 Unreasonable structure of goods export

In recent years, due to its location in the north of Jiangsu Province, Suqian has always been a less developed area in China's developed areas and a relatively closed area in the open areas. Compared with southern Jiangsu and central Jiangsu, Suqian has a very large gap, forming a

Suqian's exports of goods in the whole province is very small, accounting for only 6.0% in 2017, sharp contrast. In 2019, the total export of goods from Suqian was 2.888 billion US dollars, accounting for only 7.3% of the whole province. Suqian's total export of goods is far inferior to that of Suzhou, Wuxi, Changzhou and other cities in southern Jiangsu, and its main economic indicators are relatively backward. Compared with the other four cities in northern Jiangsu, it is also relatively backward. The export of goods in Suqian is still in the stage of relying on the traditional labor cost advantage. Although there are some famous and excellent products (mainly in the tobacco and alcohol industry and textile industry), the main export commodities are still primary products and intermediate products, with relatively low profits. The export structure of Suqian's goods is not reasonable, and the quality of its products is not high. From the perspective of industrial structure, the economic development of Suqian mainly relies on petroleum, chemical and other industries, and the contribution of the tertiary industry to economic growth is not enough. The layout of the service industry is traditional and single, and the producer service industry is relatively backward, lacking interaction with the advanced manufacturing industry. From the perspective of product structure, the technical force is weak, the high-tech products are few, and the products with high energy consumption and high resource consumption account for a large proportion. Product trade is mainly resource-intensive and labor-intensive products, with low technology content and added value, and weak brand awareness.

## **4. ANALYSIS OF THE REASONS FOR THE PROBLEMS IN THE EXPORT OF GOODS IN SUQIAN CITY**

### **4.1 Internal Reasons**

#### **4.1.1 Insufficient brand awareness**

Since the development of foreign trade in Suqian, although the export of goods has been constantly developed, the exported goods are mainly labor-intensive products and primary products. The development of foreign trade also relies heavily on the traditional stage of low labor cost advantage, and there is a serious lack of independent brands. And for a long time, Suqian has not given enough attention to the structure of export goods, which leads to the participation of foreign trade export enterprises, whose production of export products does not have enough brand awareness, thus ignoring the investment in technology research and development. At present, the lowcost advantage of the labor force that Suqian exports depend on is constantly weakened. In order to promote the further development of goods exports, it is necessary to strengthen brand awareness.

#### **4.1.2 Insufficient level of industrial development**

Nowadays, due to its unreasonable industrial structure and the overall level of industrial development, Suqian has increasingly become an important factor restricting the further development of Suqian's foreign trade exports. In recent years, although Suqian is constantly optimizing the structure of the tertiary industry, the optimization of the employment structure of the tertiary industry has also achieved some results, and the industrial structure has been further improved. The proportion of the primary industry has been decreasing, the proportion of the tertiary industry has been increasing, and the proportion of the secondary industry has increased first and then decreased. However, in general, the secondary industry in Suqian city still occupies a dominant position. Although the level of industrialization in Suqian is relatively high, the requirement for new industrialization is to continuously accelerate the development of the tertiary industry. Especially at present, China has entered the 14th Five-Year Development Plan stage, and the 14th Five-Year Plan has put forward higher requirements for high-quality development and innovative development. At present, Suqian has realized that in order to

achieve development in the current international and domestic economic development environment, it is necessary to vigorously develop the tertiary industry, and vigorously promote the export industry to higher quality and innovative development.

#### **4.1.3 Insufficient location advantages**

Suqian city is located in the north of Jiangsu Province, in the central belt of Xuzhou, Huai'an and Lianyungang, in the cross-radiation area of the Longhai economic belt, coastal economic belt and riverside economic belt, and it borders Anhui Province in the west. Since ancient times, it has been known as "looking to the north of Qilu and the south of the Huaihe River in the middle of the two rivers (namely the Yellow River and the Yangtze River) and choking the throat of the two capitals (namely Beijing and Nanjing)".<sup>10</sup> Although Suqian is in the cross-radiation area of the above three economic belts, the radiation effect of these three economic belts on the development of Suqian's goods export is small, and the development scale and radiation effect of these three economic belts are not as good as the Yangtze River Delta economic belt. In addition, although the radiation range of the Yangtze River Delta Economic Belt is very wide, the radiation effect of Suqian is much weaker than that of other areas in the province due to its location factors.

### **4.2 External Causes**

#### **4.2.1 Impact of COVID-19**

At the beginning of the New Year of 2020, a sudden outbreak of COVID-19 swept the world and had a huge impact on the global economy. In order to cope with the novel corona virus pneumonia (hereinafter referred to as "COVID-19"), provinces across the country have adopted extremely strict traffic and personnel control measures to minimize the movement of people. The accommodation, catering, logistics, tourism and other industries are almost "stationary", workers are delayed to resume work, factories are delayed in production, and export orders cannot be completed according to the original schedule. The supply of export products has suffered a direct impact. Since March 2020, the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in other countries (regions) has increased sharply, and the situation abroad has continued to deteriorate. In this international public health emergency, China has taken the lead in achieving a stage

victory, and Chinese enterprises have resumed work and production. However, the epidemic situation in other countries (regions), especially major developed economies, is still not optimistic. The world economy has fallen into a deep recession, international market demand has shrunk sharply, and the risk of industrial and supply chain disruption has intensified, disrupting the order of international trade activities. The COVID-19 pandemic will continue to have an impact on China's export trade, and the export situation in 2020 and 2021 will be extremely severe. Under the impact of COVID-19, textile, clothing, toys and other labor-intensive products are the most affected, while Suqian's goods export products are mainly labor-intensive products, so in this case, Suqian's goods export has been impacted to a certain extent.

#### **4.2.2 Impact of Sino-US trade frictions**

The Sino-US trade war since 2018 has caused an unprecedented impact on China's export environment, and Chinese export enterprises are facing unprecedented challenges. Under the correct leadership of the CPC Central Committee and The State Council, the Chinese and US economic and trade delegations conducted 13 extremely arduous and "see-saw" economic and trade negotiations, and finally reached the first phase of the economic and trade agreement and opened the second phase of the agreement negotiations. Although the trade war between China and the US has been eased to some extent, it is still too early for the trade war to come to an end. Chinese enterprises, especially export-oriented enterprises, still face many difficulties. In addition, the weak international market, high domestic costs, and the combined impact of COVID-19 have had a great impact on foreign trade enterprises, and foreign trade orders have decreased significantly. Under this situation, goods export enterprises in Suqian city have also been affected to a certain extent.

#### **4.2.3 Low demand in the international market**

At present, the shrinking demand in the international market is bound to have an impact on China's export trade, and problems such as the reduction of new orders in foreign trade have gradually emerged. The difficulty that our country foreign trade development faces is not optimistic. In the overall shrinking international market demand environment, and most of the goods exported by Suqian are labor-intensive products and primary products, the shrinking international

market demand has a great impact on the demand of such products. In addition, with the continuous development of foreign trade in Southeast Asia, India and other countries or regions, In addition, with the continuous development of foreign trade in Southeast Asia, India and other countries or regions, it is also constantly delivering labor-intensive products and primary products to the international market, which leads to the low demand in the international market, the demand for such products in the international market will soon be saturated. The goods exported by Southeast Asia and India are naturally much less competitive than those exported by Suqian because of their cheaper labor force.

#### **4.2.4. High trade barriers**

Since China's entry into WTO, it is true that the tariff threshold for our exports has been lowered, but new trade protectionist policies have appeared again. The appearance of green barrier makes our country's foreign trade face the test. Especially in the international region, the inspection requirements for imported goods are extremely high, so China's export industry in the face of such high testing standards reflected an obvious inadaptation; a short period of time cannot adjust the phenomenon. In addition, in 2003, the British government published "Our Energy Future -- Creating a Low-carbon Economy", which mentioned "low-carbon economy" for the first time. In 2007, the United Kingdom took the lead in introducing carbon labeling. In April 2009, Japan started a trial carbon labeling system. In July 2011, France announced that all products sold in the country must provide a "carbon footprint" label. In addition, these countries or regions also impose special carbon dioxide emission tariffs on imports of energy-intensive products. It can be seen that many Western countries have already taken vigorously developing green and low-carbon economy as an emerging economic growth point characterized by low energy consumption, low pollution and low carbon emissions. However, the United States and some developed countries in the European Union often set up low-carbon barriers to products from developing countries in the name of environment. These developed countries set up low-carbon barriers and impose carbon tariffs for the following purposes: to improve their competitiveness, maintain their economic hegemony, and weaken the manufacturing export capacity of China and other large developing countries; By imposing carbon

tariffs, they safeguard their national economic interests; Shifting the responsibility and cost of environmental governance. This has seriously affected the rational and optimal allocation of resources around the world and runs counter to the WTO's principle of free trade. Suqian is a relatively weak area in the north of Jiangsu province. At present, its export products are mainly industrial products, which will inevitably reduce the competitiveness of Suqian's export products.

#### **4.2.5 Industrial transfer**

In order to "use the remaining economic development capacity of the eastern coastal areas to improve the economic and social development level of the western region and consolidate national defense." In January 2000, The State Council set up the Leading Group for the Development of the Western region. Since the "Western development" policy was put forward in 2000, and through the strategic deployment of the "11th Five-Year Plan" for Western Development in 2006 and the "12th Five-Year Plan" for Western Development in 2012, more and more industries and enterprises began to move to the west, mainly labor-intensive industries and resource-intensive industries. During this period, it is also the stage of the development of Suqian's export of goods. Suqian needs to rely on the industrial transfer of southern and central Jiangsu to develop its export of goods. In addition, Suqian's export of goods was dominated by labor-intensive products and resource-intensive products. Although in recent years, Suqian has also begun to optimize and upgrade its industrial structure, due to the slow development of this process in Suqian, the export of goods still relies more on labor-intensive products and primary products. Therefore, the industrial transfer brought by the "development of the West" has a great impact on the export of goods in Suqian. With the continuous promotion of "western development", the export of goods in Suqian will be greatly affected during this period.

With the continuous development of China's economy, the advantage of low labor price in China is constantly weakening. More and more enterprises begin to transfer their production to Southeast Asia, India and other countries with lower labor price, and engage in the production of products in these countries or regions. Because these countries or regions have cheaper labor, the products produced in these

countries or regions have certain advantages in price, while the goods exported from Suqian may lack price advantages compared with it, which will lead to the decline of the competitiveness of the goods exported from Suqian, the decrease of orders, and then lead to the slowdown or even decline of the growth of the export value of Suqian goods.

### **5. EASURES TO IMPROVE THE EXPORT OF GOODS IN SUQIAN CITY**

#### **5.1 Government Level**

##### **5.1.1 Seize the development opportunity of the Belt and Road to promote industrial transfer**

As of January 30, 2021, China had signed 205 Belt and Road cooperation documents with 171 countries and international organizations. Under the guidance of the Belt and Road Initiative, China is committed to the connectivity of the Asian, European and African continents and adjacent oceans, establishing and strengthening connectivity partnerships among countries along the Belt and Road, and building an all-dimensional, multi-tiered and comprehensive connectivity network to achieve diversified, independent, balanced and sustainable development of countries along the Belt and Road. Once the "Belt and Road" strategy is successfully implemented, the Eurasian continent will be connected, and the transportation cost will be greatly reduced in all regions along the Belt and Road, providing a huge space for trade among various regions. As Suqian is located in an important position of "One Belt and One Road", it should constantly adapt to the situation, vigorously develop export-oriented economy, and actively participate in the construction of "One Belt and One Road" strategy.

With the deepening of the "One Belt and One Road" strategy, the construction of free trade area and the negotiation of multilateral trade agreement are in full swing. At the same time, the successful implementation of "The Belt and Road" will be conducive to the development of regional economy and regional economic integration in countries or regions along the Belt and Road. Countries around the Belt and Road have also shown considerable support, including the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor jointly built by China and Pakistan, the China- South Korea Free Trade Agreement signed between

China and South Korea, The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) specially established to support the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative and the China-Mauritius Free Trade Agreement, the first free trade agreement signed between China and African countries, which took effect on January 1, 2021. The signing of these free trade zones and multilateral trade agreements have created extremely favorable conditions for the development of goods export in Suqian.

In addition, the successful implementation of the "Belt and Road" strategy will further promote the industrial transfer of countries and regions along the route. At present, a big problem faced by Suqian's goods export is the unreasonable structure of goods export. For some developed countries along the "Belt and Road", such as Japan and South Korea, they have a high level of development, but their economic development speed is also declining, so they need to seek new models to promote further development. While looking for a new development model, it will transfer some domestic technology-intensive and high value-added industries. Suqian should take advantage of this opportunity to actively undertake the transferred industries of these countries and promote the optimization of the structure of goods export. At the same time, China is also in the stage of economic structural transformation, and the development of the Belt and Road will inevitably transfer China's labor-intensive and capital-intensive industries to countries along the Belt and Road, mainly in Central Asia and Southeast Asia. Therefore, while undertaking the transfer of technology-intensive and high value-added industries, Suqian should also actively adapt to the domestic industrial transfer to the outside world, and drive its own industrial transformation and upgrading.

### **5.1.2 Strengthen the linkage with the cities in northern Jiangsu**

Since Suqian and the other four cities in northern Jiangsu are located in the Huaihai Economic Zone, it is necessary to strengthen the coordinated and overall development among the five cities in northern Jiangsu. <sup>14</sup>First of all, we should make full use of the East Longhai Line, take Xuzhou, an important node city of the "Belt and Road" Initiative, combine the resource advantages and characteristic industries of the five cities in northern Jiangsu, and strengthen the complementary advantages among regions, so

as to solve the problems of scattered, small, chaotic and high cost in the transportation system in northern Jiangsu, and improve the construction of a modern logistics system. <sup>15</sup>To enhance the integrity and coordination of the development of northern Jiangsu. At the same time, Suqian should speed up the infrastructure connectivity with the other four cities in northern Jiangsu, accelerate the construction of the Xulian Railway passenger dedicated line, Xulian Huaiyan, Lianyan and other fast railways, actively promote the construction of Lianyungang new airport, accelerate the construction of the Lianshu and Lianxu Canal, so as to form a comprehensive three-dimensional transportation network closely linked with the "Belt and Road", and enhance the overall competitiveness of the region.

To develop a higher level of open economy, we should accelerate the transformation and upgrading of foreign trade, optimize labor-intensive export industries and traditional industries, encourage and support the export of high-tech industries, promote export brand of characteristic and advantageous industries, promote the cooperation between Suqian local enterprises and multinational companies, extend the industrial chain, improve the quality of Suqian goods export products, and encourage enterprises to "go out" in groups. To the west, we should actively deepen cooperation and exchanges with countries along the Belt and Road, especially in Central Asia, and expand markets along the belt and Road. We will actively build overseas economic and trade cooperation areas, make good use of the zero-tax policy of the China-Asean Free Trade Area, explore ASEAN markets in depth, and promote the development of cross-border e-commerce in Suqian by using the "Internet Plus" model.

### **5.1.3 Improve the construction of modern logistics system and lay a solid foundation for opening up**

We should make full use of the East Longhai Line, take Xuzhou, an important node city of the "Belt and Road" Initiative, combine the resource advantages and characteristic industries of the five cities in northern Jiangsu, strengthen the complementarity of regional advantages, solve the existing problems of scattered, small, chaotic and high cost of the transportation system in northern Jiangsu, improve the construction of modern logistics system, and enhance the integrity and coordination of the development of

northern Jiangsu. At the same time, we should accelerate the infrastructure connectivity, accelerate the construction of the Xulian Railway passenger dedicated line, Xulianhuaiyan, Lianyan and other fast railways, actively promote the construction of Lianyungang new airport, speed up the construction of Lianshu and Lianxu Canal, form a comprehensive three-dimensional transportation network closely connected with the "Belt and Road", and improve the overall competitiveness of the region.

#### **5.1.4 Cultivating and introducing high-level talents to stimulate economic vitality**

At the same time, in order to meet the requirements of high-tech development, Suqian city should strengthen the cultivation of high-level talents to provide intellectual and talent support for Suqian's integration into the "Belt and Road" construction. First of all, it is necessary to introduce innovative talents and teams, focusing on the introduction of scientists and innovation teams that are urgently needed to master key technologies and drive the development of emerging disciplines and strategic emerging industries. We will continue to improve policies on talent introduction, build platforms for talent innovation, and establish talent bases such as engineering (technology) research centers and pilot zones for scientific and technological innovation and reform. Second, we need to accelerate the cultivation of high-quality talents. We will cultivate professional and skilled personnel in a targeted manner, strengthen cooperation with domestic and foreign universities, cultivate highly skilled personnel, professional and technical personnel, and enterprise management personnel through multiple channels through cooperation in running schools, exchanges and cooperation, and establish cross-regional human resources and training bases.

#### **5.1.5 Promote green development in an all-round way and give play to innovation as the first driving force**

In strict accordance with the provisions of the Outline of the National Innovation-Driven Development Strategy and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and based on the actual resource endowment and actual needs of northern Jiangsu, it is necessary to give priority to ecology and green development as the orientation, take innovation as the first driving force, and actively explore the creation of an

innovation demonstration zone for the national Agenda for Sustainable Development. "The Belt and Road" also provides new opportunities for the sustainable development of Suqian. Northern Jiangsu should make full use of favorable policies such as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, the China-South Korea Free Trade Agreement and the AIIB, take the initiative to vigorously develop the open economy, develop green high-end technology industries driven by innovation, promote comprehensive innovation with scientific and technological innovation as the core, and achieve high-quality development.

### **5.2 At the Enterprise Level**

#### **5.2.1 Increasing investment in technology R&D**

In order to further promote the development of the goods exports of Suqian enterprises, it is necessary to constantly adapt to the new rules of the game in developed countries. For example, the illegal implementation of low-carbon barriers and green trade barriers in developed countries has caused great challenges to the goods export enterprises in Suqian city. But from another aspect, low-carbon and green economic development is the trend of future global economic development. In order to catch up with the trend of economic development, Suqian export enterprises should plan ahead, seize the opportunity, and increase investment in technology research and development. Research and development of high low-carbon technology, so as to obtain more development opportunities.

#### **5.2.2 Adjusting and Optimizing the industrial structure**

Most of the goods export enterprises in Suqian are labor-intensive enterprises. With the continuous promotion of the "One Belt and One Road" strategy, labor-intensive industries are constantly shifting to countries along the "One Belt and One Road", and most of these countries have labor forces with advantages over Suqian. Therefore, it is more and more unfeasible for Suqian goods export enterprises to promote the export of goods by virtue of the advantage of low labor costs. In order to realize the continuous development of enterprises, foreign trade enterprises should actively adjust and optimize the industrial structure, accelerate the development of the cluster-leading industry, improve industrial precision and adhesion, promote the industrial structure from the low-end

to the high-end, and further subdivide the development direction of the industry.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Through the above research and analysis, it can be seen that the development of Suqian's goods exports has maintained a good momentum of growth since 2017- 2019. Although there are certain fluctuations in the growth rate of goods exported during this period, the total amount of goods exported is still on the rise overall. Especially under the dual influence of the outbreak of COVID-19 in early 2020 and the Sino-US trade war, the export of goods in Suqian has still achieved good results, which is worthy of recognition. However, while seeing the continuous development of Suqian's goods export, we should also see the problems existing in Suqian's goods export. For example, there is a big gap between southern Jiangsu and central Jiangsu, the development of various sectors is unbalanced: the structure of goods exports is not reasonable; etc. Of course, when we look at the problems, we should also look at the internal and external causes of these problems.

After an in-depth analysis of the status quo and existing problems of the development of goods exports in Suqian City, in order to further develop the goods exports in Suqian City, the government and enterprises need to make efforts to promote their development. It can be predicted that with the continuous promotion of measures taken by the government and enterprises to promote the export of goods in Suqian, the export structure of goods in Suqian will be more reasonable, and the gap between Suqian and South Jiangsu will be gradually narrowed, and the development of each sector will be more coordinated. With the coming of the "14th Five-Year Plan", the development of Suqian's goods exports will be further improved.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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