

A Character Extension method based on storytelling

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1. Introduction

Korean government started character industry policy since 2003. The policy focuses on the quality improvement of character products such as maximization of associated business, overseas expansion of domestic characters, copyright reinforcement through the improvement of the distribution structure. From the achievement of this policy, success cases related to contents started to increase. Finally, the character business renaissance unfolds as the industry promotion know-how has been accumulated and characters that are from cartoon, game, novel, movie, and musical has been actualized by market segmentation strategy.



Pororopark

New character markets have been continually developed since 2013, focusing on indoor theme park like character experience exhibition, character kids cafe, and performing arts market like character musical [1]. However, domestic characters lean too much towards on children market and commercialization easiness for making character business makes the market easily formed.

The foundation of the character business is to license characters, contents can be expanded and they can spread out with cartoons and movies. In case of most famous characters, over 50 percent of revenue is made through licensing. Because of this, cartoons' contents are sometimes perceived as a method of large scale promotion for the character business.

In the perspective of the character business, the simple formativeness for commercialization has strong advantages for industrialization. However, the simple formativeness for industrial easiness and biased storytelling brings to contents vulnerability. After all, most characters without capitol and marketing strategies can disappear, not trying to adjust to the market, and the character business can be smaller in the end. On this fact, in order to look at the correlation between character extension and storytelling, two cases; *Adventure Time with Finn & Jake* and *Emily the Strange* are introduced and analyzed with business success factors in this paper.

2. Use Case Analysis storytelling

2.1. Adventure Time with Finn & Jake

Adventure Time with Finn & Jake has been aired since 2010 from Cartoon Network. The cartoon is an American surreal and humorous fantasy animated television series. Princess, villain, and magic appear in the fantasy world 'The Land of Ooo' and "Finn" who wants to be a hero and "Jake" who uses magic play roles in the cartoon.

The cartoon was firstly produced as a short animation and was aired in 2008 as a part of Random Cartoon by channel Nickelodeon which is the biggest worldwide kids entertainment channel and is aired to three hundred and fifty million households across 175 countries in now 2013. The cartoon had gained great public popularity. The Cartoon Network bought the publication right of it. It has been reformed and the cartoon of today is made up.

Diverse factors like cute pictorial style, unique characters, and enthusiastic performance of dubbing artist created a synergy effect and made the cartoon popular. Although the TV animated cartoon targets to younger generation, producers contributed to music in the cartoon also. The cartoon have earned favorable reviews because of the music. The music often emerges in episodes and the music that the dubbing artists sings pleases audiences.

Various episodes unfold with different cultural archetype resources; princess, vampire, witch, and others in post-Apocalypse setting. More interesting factors like sex change version story telling are added in the play development, so characters became also extended.

Adventure Time with Finn & Jake shows how the storytelling material is used and how the material makes the contents enriched. The *Adventure Time with Finn & Jake* is analyzed as a good case of character extension.

2.2. Emily the Strange

"Emily" is a young girl who has a defiant and bad attitude with angry face and criticize sharply with no hesitation. She has four mean cats. Sometimes she puts black lipstick and broken mirrors on a dressing table, and spills fake blood there. She stays with vampire and ghost.

Emily the Strange was created in 1993 by Cosmic Debris which was founded by skate boarder Robe Laser and racing driver Matt Lid in San Francisco, 1991. The character *Emily* that was printed t-shirts of skateboarders in Santa Cruz became a fashion icon in San Francisco not only in books, but also stickers, clothes, purse, bags, and others. The character represented itself as funky and goth style and it is loved world widely.

Story telling in *Emily the Strange* shows different aspects compared to *Adventure Time with Finn & Jake*. The character *Emily* is described based on funky and goth identity by gathering its fandom. Her characters like unexpected behavior, carefree manner of speaking, jaundiced view of the society, and vagarious wackiness gain the sympathy from teenagers and represent funky and goth culture. Accordingly, the character itself is recognized as a cultural original form.

As not only character clothes and fancy supplies, but the movie were produced. The *Emily the Strange* had broadened its business area. The case is analyzed as a model for cultural original form of storytelling over character business.



Adventure Time with Finn & Jake



Emily the Strange

2.3. Ways of Character Diversification with Cultural Original Form of Storytelling

The key competitiveness of contents industry is from creative, unique theme and story. In order to make characters extended as their own identities, objects of storytelling should be used free and the cultural original form theme should be reconstructed according to characters' situations and features. Developed countries have already produced special story contents, borrowing all over the world cultural original forms. Especially, over 95% of Disney works have borrowed different cultural archetype resources from Europe, Asia, and others [2].

Domestic character industry has achieved excellent results in a short period. Domestic character industry is contributed to revival of the field as cartoons are aired in the Americas, Europe, China, and Japan that made by Korean or joint produced.

Pororo, the Little Penguin was aired in the biggest channel TF1 in France. *Mix Master* is distributed by Nickelodeon, the United Kingdom and Cartoon Network Asia. *Iron Kid* is aired by Kids' WB, the United States. *Papie Friend* is aired in France through the channel France 5. *Chiro and Friends* is aired in Japan through the channel NHK. *Dbuba Noonbory* is aired in American through CBS. *Kioka* and *RobocaPoli* are aired in France through the channel Canal Plus. Korean creative animations were aired all over the world through the main channels. These works' themes, genre, and business factors were preplanned to fit to the Americas, Europe, Asian countries like china and Japan markets. From the initial planning step, success possibility of overseas business went up by discussing work themes and design with broadcaster and overseas distributing agency and considering condition of broadcasting and market trend [3]. However, the biased plan following the success format results in standardization of domestic characters.

The reason that characters cannot be extended in spite of many characters appearance is originated from the approach to deal with characters from the business viewpoint. Characters should be recognized and planned as a brand. A process that characters express their inherent features is necessary. Leading the process is storytelling, and it links to vitalize the characters. Thus, to solve the current domestic characters' standardization problems, solutions can be found from storytelling which is used with various cultural original form themes.

3. Conclusion

In order to enhance the commercial value of character contents, storytelling is required. As the two cases mentioned above, the main factor of character extension is from creative storytelling.

Adventure Time with Finn & Jake uses traditional cultural original form themes, and modifies storytelling. *Emily the Strange* is storytelling itself which is implied cultural factors.

There is difference in ways to find the themes, but storytelling which was found and used cultural original form themes became to be encouraged, be loved, and be settled as continually loved characters with distinguishable creativity compared to other characters.

In an age of global competition, competition for acquiring the themes among countries is inevitable. To be successful for domestic contents in the global market, storytelling and extension can attract consumers' attention. Based on organized storytelling, domestic character industry is expected to balance between common and distinguishable factors with various characters appearance.

[1] Han, Chang-Wan, Analysis on elements of policy changes in character industry, Cartoon Animation Study, Vol.-No.33, 2013

[2] Kim Wonje, Global Contents Development Strategy based on Cultural Heritage Story being Resources, Contents Column, 2013

[3] Creative Industry and Contents, Korea Creative Content Agency, Creative Industry and Contents, March and April number, 2013