

A Case Study on the Diversity of International Co-produced Drama

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Abstract

The importance of international co-production that enables content production, diversification of overseas markets, and diversification has been highlighted as demand for content has soared due to intensifying competition between media outlets, while contents provision has become easier due to changes in media environment such as convergence of broadcasting and communication and the spread of mobile Internet.

In particular, the boom in Korean dramas, called the Korean Wave in China, opened up a new market after "My Love from the Star" in 2014, and in 2016, Netflix's entry into Korea served as an opportunity for local broadcasters and producers to seek international co-production. In addition, "Good Doctor" which was aired on American Broadcasting Co. (ABC) in 2017, has topped the same time slot for the first time in 29 years, and is set to air season 4 this fall. Accordingly, overseas broadcasters and production companies wanted to collaborate with domestic broadcasters and producers, and since 2011, they have conducted a total of 12 co-produced dramas until 2019. Unfortunately, however, there are few studies related to international co-production dramas in the domestic industry and academia.

In this paper, we present to help Korea, which used to be a powerhouse in complete export-type content, move toward becoming a powerhouse in international co-produced dramas. In addition, it is meaningful that the research focused on the current status and achievements of international co-production dramas, which have not been studied much, and the diversity of international co-production dramas in the future through the analysis of the form and structure of international co-production.

Keywords: *Content, Content Production, Diversification of Overseas Markets, Diversity, International Co-Production, International Co-Production Drama*

1. Introduction

Currently, the global broadcasting and video viewing market is growing very rapidly through the Internet. These Internet technologies have become more and more rapidly developed, making it possible to upload and sample videos from places where the Internet is connected [1]. After "My Love from the Star" in 2014, the boom in Korean dramas called the Korean Wave in China opened up a new market. In particular, in the

Chinese market, mobile users can watch Korean dramas anytime, anywhere through Internet-enabled mobile devices [2].

As a result, Korean broadcasting companies (broadcasters and production companies) that dream of maximizing profits have voluntarily taken the lead in international joint productions such as local remakes. Unfortunately, however, comprehensive evaluation and research on the performance of these co-produced dramas have not yet been active in the industry and academia.

In the domestic drama production market, including "The World of Couples" which recently ended, domestic remakes of famous foreign dramas such as "Designated Survivors", "Anturaji", "Good Doctor", "Signal", "Memories", "Misaeng", "God's Gift 14 Days", "Kill Me Heal Me", "My Love from the Star", "Hotel Del Luna" and many other dramas. In particular, "Good Doctor" which was remade in the U.S. in 2017, has broken the record for the highest box office hit of ABC's new drama over the past 29 years, and has already finished broadcasting until season 3. And, season 4 is set to air this fall (September).

The genre characteristics of locally remade dramas, such as domestic and overseas, are to diversify the genre characteristics of medical, crime, investigation, court, medicine, thriller, mystery, and fantasy in general narrative structures such as general romance and romance, so that there will be no cultural discount when localizing remakes.

In addition, in the global content market, the rapid technological evolution, convergence of broadcasting and communication through digital convergence, and the proliferation of mobile Internet have made it easier to provide content to global Over The Top (OTT) platforms such as Netflix and Disney Plus, while increasing competition between media and platforms has led to a surge in demand for content, which has highlighted the importance of international co-production that enables diversification and diversification of content production and overseas markets [3].

In line with the growing trend of global OTT platforms, the revitalization of international joint production is important in expanding the size of production costs and minimizing the risk of uncertainty of success. Therefore, research on the characteristics of international co-produced dramas is significant not only in industry but also academically. In this context, we will explore the current status and general characteristics of international co-production dramas conducted by domestic operators (broadcasters and producers), and the genre characteristics of international co-production dramas. Finally, we will set the goal of this study to analyze how international co-production dramas are produced in such a way that minimizes the uncertainty of international co-production success, while at the same time providing implications for the direction in which international co-production methods should move forward.

2. Related Works

2.1 Definition of international co-production

International co-production is basically done by sharing the resources needed to produce the program, so it emphasizes joint rights such as sharing or sharing the rights to the program [4-6]. After all, co-production is a method in which the national and co-producers jointly bear financial resources, such as resources, manpower, technology, content facilities and equipment, and the national and co-producers jointly participate in the production process [4, 6-7], and the types of international co-production are as shown in Table 1. First, if only capital participates in the way it participates, it is divided into pre-sales and co-financing, and second, if capital and production participate together, it is divided into swapping and

co-operation.

Table 1. The type of International Co-production

Type	Content	Participatory Method
Pre-sales	Before the production begins, the right to broadcast the broadcast content is available. Engage in the concept of pre-investment by selling	Capital
Co-financing	After capital investment, we participate in the review of the production, How you don't participate in the production process	Capital
Swapping	The way a co-production company divides a series into one and produces and then exchanges it simultaneously with a financial partnership. A method of making and exchanging each subject under the same theme	Capital and Production
Co-operation	The co-producer filmed it at the same time as the financial partnership. A method of co-production of the overall process, such as editing	Capital And Production

2.2 Mode of international co-production

International co-production with the five Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries and Korea has been taking place even before the outbreak of the Korean Wave, which can be found in Table 2. In particular, in the field of broadcasting, the government is currently trying to change from the early stage of the spread of the Korean Wave, the special program-oriented documentary for promoting goodwill and cultural exchanges between countries, to dramas and entertainment programs. From documentary programs such as Thailand's "The Bridge of Two Culture" in 2013 and Malaysia's "Asian Hub Malaysia" to Vietnam's "Love at First Song" in 2018 and "Running Man" in 2019 are being co-produced in five ASEAN countries. As the genre is becoming more diverse, we would like to find out how international co-produced dramas are being produced by foreign broadcasters and domestic broadcasters companies

Table 2. Current Status of Co-Production with Korea in the five ASEAN countries

Nation	Genre	Program Name
Malaysia	Documentary	Asian Hub Malaysia (2013)
Vietnam	Drama	Love at First Song (2018)
Vietnam	Entertainment	Oh! My Baby (2016)
Vietnam	Entertainment	Running Man (2019)
Vietnam	Documentary	Future People's Education (2017)
Singapore	Entertainment	A Date with K-pop Stars (2014)

Indonesia	Drama	Love Distance (2018)
Indonesia	Entertainment	Galaxy Superstar (2012)
Thailand	Entertainment	Korea-Thailand Dream Team (2015)
Thailand	Entertainment	The Team Chef (2018)
Thailand	Documentary	The Bridge of Two Cultures (2013)

2.3 Government support system of international co-production

As can be seen in Table 3 and Table 4 since 2011, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MCST) has been carrying out support projects in various genres such as documentaries, entertainment programs, and dramas through international joint production support projects, and Korea Culture Content Agency (KOCCA) selects local broadcasting production operators (broadcasters and production companies) through support projects early every year. In addition, Korea Communications Agency (KCA), a related organization under the Ministry of Science, Technology, Information and Communication, conducts international joint production support projects every year.

Table 3. KOCCA: International Co-production Support Project

Sortation	Documentary Section	Drama, Entertainment Section
Support Target	Broadcasting and video independent production company, Broadcasting company (Consortium is available)	
Target Country	All over the country	
Scale of Support	Up to 2.5 billion won per piece / A total of three assignments or less	Up to 3.5 billion won per piece / A total of two assignments or less
Number of Co-production	At least 2 episodes per task (60 minutes per episode)	

Table 4. KCA: International Co-production Support Project

Sortation	Maximum Amount of Support	Main Content
International co-production	5 billion won	1. International co-production, support for pre-sale projects 2. Conditions for self-payment of more than 20% of government subsidies

3. Proposed Method

The purpose of this study is to analyze the performance and uncertainty minimization strategies of dramas produced and aired in international co-production methods from 2011 to 2019. Due to the characteristics of sharing the resources needed for the production of the program by each country, and the cultural discounts for each country are different, it will be difficult not only for the completion of the production but also for the success of the production. Therefore, it is significant to study how international co-production dramas have achieved and how changes in strategies to minimize the uncertainty of success are emerging.

In the end, the research will provide an opportunity to explore the most realistic international co-production methods by maximizing the advantages of international co-production and minimizing shortcomings in the global media and platform market environment of global OTT platforms such as Netflix and Disney Plus.

Thus, the following research questions were set up in this study to analyze the performance and success strategies of international co-produced dramas.

RQ1. What are the current status and general characteristics of international co-produced dramas?

RQ2. What are the genre characteristics of international co-production dramas?

RQ3. How is the production method of international co-production dramas?

In order to analyze the performance of international co-produced dramas, 12 dramas produced through international co-production were selected for analysis from 2011 to 2019. To this end, the international co-production support projects of KOCCA and KCA and data from the Korea Drama Producers Association (KODA) were used.

4. Experimental Results

4.1 Analyzing the status of international co-produced dramas and producers

"What are the current status and general characteristics of international co-produced dramas?" in <Research Question 1>, which analyzed the current status of 12 international co-produced dramas and producers produced through international co-production from 2011 to 2019 is as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Current Status of the Producer of International Co-produced Dramas

Sortation	2011-2013	2014-2016	2017-2019	Total
Broadcasting Company	3	0	1	4
Production Company	0	3	5	8
Total	3	3	6	12

As a result of this study, in the early 2010s, all three of the three international co-produced dramas were led by broadcasters, which had a structural problem that outsourced producers could not have any rights because they held 100% of all copyrights until early 2010. However, five of the six international co-produced dramas produced from 2014 to 2019 were produced by outsourced production companies, and

the reasons are as follows.

Table 6. The Status of International Co-produced Dramas in line with the Korean Wave boom in China

Title	Year	Broadcasting Company	Production Company
Cinderella and Four Knights	2016	tvN	HB Entertainment, Iqiyi
Moon Lovers : Bobo Gyeongsim Ryeo	2016	SBS	YG Entertainment, NBC Universal etc.,
Hwarang : The Beginning	2016	KBS	Hwarang Culture Company Limited, Oh-boy Project
Saimdang : The Diary of Light	2016	SBS	Group8, Empler Entertainment

First, after "My Love from the Star" in 2014, an international co-produced drama has been produced in the form of a combination of huge capital, including China, and Korean production companies due to the Korean Wave boom in China, and the current status is as shown in Table 6.

In the case of "Cinderella and Four Knight", China's iqiya (Iqiyi is an online video platform based in Beijing, China launched on April 22, 2010), in the case of "Moon Lovers: Bobo Gyeongsim Rye" UK-based NBC Universal, and in the case of "Saimdang: The Diary of Light" Hong Kong-based Empler Entertainment participated in the international co-produced drama in the form of joint investment.

Second, after "God's Gift" in June 2017 and "Good Doctor" in September, ABC in the U.S., interest in Korean dramas and international co-production with Korea has increased. In particular, "Good Doctor" broke ABC's highest ratings in the same time slot in 29 years, making it the most watched ABC drama that still has 12 million viewers per episode. Also, it has now finished broadcasting until season 3, and will air season 4 of 2020 this fall (September 2020).

As such, Korea's work, which used to be an Asian periphery, has been a huge success in the U.S. local drama market, so far it has changed from the Asian-oriented media-oriented co-production style led by China to international co-production with global media companies. In 2018, international co-produced "Suits" was broadcast by KBS, and Monster Union and Entertainment Media Pictures participated as producers, while "Top Management" was simultaneously aired worldwide on YouTube Premium, and STUDIO 329 and YouTube participated as producers.

Table 7. The status of International Co-produced Dramas since the launch of <Good Doctor>

Title	Year	Broadcasting Company	Production Company
Suits	2018	KBS	Monsterunion, Entermedia
Top Management	2018	YouTube	Studio 329,

Premium	YouTube
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Reflecting this, <Hotel Del Luna> signed a strategic partnership agreement with CJ E&M and Studio Dragon in February 2020 and decided to co-produce the drama in the United States [8].

Table 8. The status of International Co-produced Dramas after Netflix's entry into Korea

Title	Year	Broadcasting Company	Production Company
Kingdom Season 1	2019	Netflix	Astory, Netflix
Love Scream	2019	Netflix	Studio Dragon ,Netflix
First love	2019	Netflix	Astory, Netflix
Alone you	2020	Netflix	Studio Dragon ,Netflix
Human Class	2020	Netflix	Studio 329, Netflix
Kingdom Season 2	2020	Netflix	Astory, Netflix

Finally, in January 2016, Netflix's entry into Korea was a change. Netflix is a global OTT platform company that has the largest share of the online video market in the U.S. and Europe as of 2018 and has a 30% share in the global video streaming market as of 2019. As soon as Netflix entered Korea, it was co-produced internationally by domestic broadcasting companies (broadcasters and producers) and the original Netflix series, with their huge distribution network and capital. In 2019, three works (Kingdom Season 1, Love Scream, First love) were produced as original dramas, and in the first half of 2020, three (Alone you, Human Class, Kingdom Season 2) were produced as original dramas, and as soon as they were aired, they are meeting global viewers.

In addition, Netflix has co-produced various works such as "Sweet Home" and "Health Teacher Ahn Eun-young" and is preparing for the original "Netflix" work.

4.2 Growing Genre Convergence and Diversity in International Co-produced Dramas

"What are the genre characteristics of international co-production dramas?" in <Research Question 2> is a very important factor in the analysis of what genre of international co-production has been co-produced with a strategy to minimize the uncertainty of success in international co-production. Thus, all the elements of the genre of the 12 international co-produced dramas produced from 2011 to 2019 were listed and organized, and the results of each year's compilation of the genre elements of international co-produced dramas are as shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Genre Elements in International Co-produced Dramas

Sortation	2011-2013	2014-2016	2017-2019	Total
Drama	3	0	0	3
Romance	0	3	2	5
Crime	0	0	1	1
Court of Justice	0	0	1	1

the Historical drama	0	0	1	1
Growth	0	0	1	1
Total	3	3	6	12

International co-produced dramas have been shown to use various genres to develop stories. In the early 2010s, dramas of the narrative structure genre, such as "The Temptation of Wife" were mainly co-produced internationally, but since "My Love from the Star" in 2014, five of the nine co-produced works have been dramas of the "Romance" genre, adding a "Fantasy" element to the basic narrative structure called "Romance". This is the result of a study that once again shows that the genre favored by international co-produced dramas is not only cultural discounts but also "Romance" genre, which is a drama with no distinction between time and place.

On the other hand, the results of the study show that international co-production dramas of various genres, including crime, court, historical drama, and growth, are being produced at the same time as the Korean launch of Netflix in 2016, and interesting trends in crime and thriller genres are emerging as crime and thriller genres such as Netflix in the first half of 2020.

4.3 The mode of production of International Co-production dramas

As for <Research Question 3>, "How do you produce international co-produced dramas?" in the early 2010s, broadcasting companies were mainly pre-sales with the concept of selling broadcasting rights (remake) for broadcasting content, but since "My Love to the Star" in 2014, two methods of co-production have been dominant.

Table 10. The mode of production of International Co-production dramas

Sortation	2011-2013	2014-2016	2017-2019	Total
Pre-sales	3	0	1	4
Co-financing	0	3	1	4
Swapping	0	0	0	0
Co-operation	0	0	4	4
Total	3	3	6	12

First, for international co-production dramas produced by outsourced producers in a joint investment form, foreign broadcasters and producers such as <NBC Universal> and <Huayi Brothers> will invest their capital in a joint investment method [10], and then participate in the review of production contents, but not participates in the production process. This is the reason why domestic outsourced producers, overseas broadcasters, and production companies will jointly hold IPs and strengthen profits through this. Some of the representative works of this type of joint investment include "Cinderella and Four Knights", "Moon Lovers: Bobo Gyeongsim Ryeo" and "Saimdang: The Diary of Light".

Second, since Netflix currently co-produces this structure with Korean outsourced producers in a way that co-produces both financial partnerships and overall processes such as filming and editing at the same time, the authority of all IPs is not available to outsourced producers, but Netflix preserves current profits with 100

% of the production cost, the current outsourced producers want to participate in the international joint production. Some of these collaborative works include "Kingdom Season 1", "Love Scream", "First Love" and "Top Management".

5. Conclusion

As a result of this study, international co-production methods are on the rise in the domestic drama production industry. In the case of "Convenience Store's New Star" which is currently airing on SBS in July 2020, Disney's subsidiary "A+E Networks Korea" invested as part of international co-production, and LifeTime is providing the broadcast to viewers.

As such, all broadcasters and producers around the world have good IPs together, and they want to diversify their businesses and maximize their profits, which is international co-production.

Due to the boom in the Korean Wave in China and the success of "Good Doctor" in the U.S. co-producing around the world and internationally was actively implemented, and has been still working on international co-production in various countries and on various platforms.

In addition, if Korea's finished export content has been centered on romance genre in the international co-production drama, the study also shows an interesting trend in which crime and thriller genres are created, such as "Human Classes" which made headlines in Netflix in the first half of 2020.

This study is meaningful in that it focused on the current state of international co-production dramas that have not been studied much and the future direction of diversity. However, despite the limitations of not making a clear analysis of the reasons along with the factual understanding of the results of international co-produced dramas, the study's search for diversity in international co-produced dramas is an important attempt under the changing global media and platform environment.

In response, the company plans to conduct in-depth interviews with production experts who participated in the international joint production in the future to supplement its in-depth quality research on international joint production. Also, the fact that international co-produced dramas were not reflected in the performance of international co-produced dramas aimed at the international market by failing to focus on domestic and international ratings of international co-produced dramas remains a limitation of research. This problem is expected to create an opportunity to enhance academic value in the future by analyzing the performance of international co-produced dramas separately by subject and comparing and analyzing the results of this study.

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