

## **A Study on Hierarchy and Popularity of Foreign TV Series with Different Origin Countries among Chinese Audiences from a Uses and Gratification Perspective**

**Authors :** Terigele

**Abstract :** Cultural products are always shelved into different classes of a hierarchy that separates so-called highbrow and lowbrow cultures. This study illustrated that audiences might even construct a hierarchy according to the origin countries when consuming certain products. Chinese audiences now have access to TV series from all around the world thanks to the internet. TV series from different origin countries show some particular features in terms of length, theme, plots, accessibility, seriousness etc. Their audiences were therefore stereotyped because of what they watch. Based on in-depth interviews with 20 participants, this research has following findings: 1) Most popular origin countries of foreign TV series in China are Korea, the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan and European countries in a descending order. Korean TV series are most popular because they are less serious and more accessible compared to others. 2) In the hierarchy of the TV series, European TV series stand on the top followed by British and American TV series. Japanese TV series are also categorized into highbrow class. Korean TV series are at the bottom and always seen as lowbrow cultural products. 3) Most audiences consume TV series from more than one origin countries and have different needs when watching them. Participants reported that they watch European TV series because those TV series are more artistic than their counterparts and of great quality. They watch British and American TV series mainly to improve their English and to learn about the culture. They find Japanese TV series very enjoyable with a large variety of themes and impressive lines. Audiences watch Korean TV series mostly to entertain and kill time. 4) Audiences do care about cultural taste. Especially those who watch European, British and American TV series usually tend to consider audiences who watch nothing but Korean TV series to be shallow. On the other hand, Korean TV series' audiences seem to care less about the hierarchy of the TV series. Even when they discuss the hierarchy, they tend to accept the judgments with ironies and jokes. Future studies can dig deeply into the genre and content of TV series with different origin countries and also investigate more about the psychology of audiences regarding the gender, age, education, socioeconomic status etc.

**Keywords :** foreign TV series, hierarchy, popularity, uses and gratification

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