

# *Multiple Deconstruction of Folk-Sports-Themed TV Dramas: A Case Study of Korean Drama "Squid Game"*

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**Abstract:** This paper deconstructs multiple reasons for the successful broadcast of the phenomenal drama series "Squid Game" from the distinctive perspective of folk sports activity theme. Choosing Korean folk sports games as the narrative theme of the TV series tallies with the audience's interest in seeking entertainment, gameplay, and novelty. The modernistic narrative around the theme of folk games evokes the audience's nostalgia and escalates confrontations in the drama. The plot of the story with folk sports game theme integrates with the law of the jungle, the rules of power, and the aim of human nature, thus inspiring the audience's ultimately thinking about society and human nature. Given this, this article develops a path for TV media to tell good folk sports stories to create IP brands for folk sports-themed movies and TV dramas.

## 1. Introduction

The 9-episode Korean TV series "Squid Game," directed by Huang Donghe, was released on September 17, 2021. It promptly became popular online worldwide after airing. The storyline of this TV series that quickly dominated the screen is that "a group of adults who lived in straitened circumstances imagined winning a huge bonus of up to 45.6 billion won by participating in six simple folk sports. Every game was a process of elimination. Those expelled were immediately killed." In the narrative process, "folk sports full of childish pleasures contrasted sharply with the game rules of bloody violence; distinct and grand screen visions and intelligent advanced technological elements were integrated and connected; and diverse and interwoven life emotions and thought-provoking social ethics were mixed and difficult to distinguish." This Korean drama ranked first in the world in terms of on-demand and is the most popular TV series in the history of Netflix [1]. In real life, the live-action version of the "Red Light, Green Light" game prevailed on the streets of Rotterdam, the Netherlands. Themed experience stores attracted thousands of people in Paris, France [2]. In the current era of cultural pluralism, capital abundance, and information explosion, the popularity of a TV series is due to multiple external factors and the perfect integration of internal factors of the drama, which cannot be fully understood from only one particular dimension or perspective. Therefore, from the material selection of "folk sports," the author attempts to start with innovative narrative plots and examine from an ethical perspective to multilaterally deconstruct the success code behind the popular drama "Squid Game."

Folk sports refer to traditional sports created, inherited, and savored by local people [3]. From the perspective of folk sports, recognize the six games in the drama "Squid Game": "Red Light, Green Light" is close to running activities; "Scratch Sugar Cookies" is a manual entertainment activity; "Tug-of-War" is a collective competitive activity; "Play Marbles" is an intriguing activity testing targeting skills; "Cross the Glass Bridge" is an opportunity type activity that tests the ability to predict; "Squid game" belongs to a particularly competitive collective competition activity. The above folk sports display the competitive, sprightly, and playful national characters and historical traditions of South Koreans. "Squid Game" titles the drama with typical folk sports and runs through the entire drama with six folk sports. Undoubtedly, it is a "folk-sports-themed TV series."

All social circles have explored the reasons for the phenomenal Korean drama "Squid Game"'s breaking circles and becoming a viral hit. From a macro-social perspective, it is believed that the unimpeded capital hegemonism and inequalities of Korean society differentiation have been widely concerned by the audience [4-6]. The current economic and social predicaments effectively reflected in the drama arouse a deep resonance with the audience [7]. From the perspective of drawing support from broadcasting media platforms, it is considered that the propaganda of Netflix streaming media and the successful application of social networking platforms have resulted in cross-regional "viral" communication [8,9]. From the point of enjoying drama creation, it is supposed that the audience is prone to violence aesthetics in plots [10] and has a genuine experience of the contradiction between brutal competition and moral cooperation [11]. The above scholars analyzed the script from their respective dimensions but rarely noticed the ingenious choice of "game-themed." Some scholars believed that game-themed works were easy for people worldwide to accept and empathize with, thus promoting cross-circle and cross-cultural communications [12]. Grafting children's games into the dystopian drama of "death game" created suspense, thrills, and conflicts in the plot [13,14]. However, researchers ignored that the game theme of the play was selected from folk sports in the real life of Korean society.

After scouring a large amount of literature, it is found that there are few academic achievements in studying the successful release of "Squid Game" from the perspective of "folk-sports-themed." The author believes that selecting authentic and visible folk sports as the theme is the key to the success of this exciting and bewitching drama and the most powerful creation cornerstone. Therefore, this paper attempts to analyze the multiple factors for the global popularity of "Squid Game" from three aspects: carefully selecting folk sports to demonstrate the charm of games, adopting an innovative narrative to attract the audience, and pouring ethics into the drama to stimulate the audience's rational reflection. Then, this paper proposes two suggestions to anchor the cross-cultural communication power of folk sports culture and promote the innovative development of sports-themed movies and TV dramas.

For the first time, this paper focuses on the perspective of material selection of "folk sports" and comprehensively investigates multiple reasons for the success of "Squid Game," effectively filling the theoretical gap in understanding the play from the angle of archetypal themes. In terms of methods and data, this paper is based on the case study of "Squid Game," with extensive references to the scripts and literary theories of Chinese TV dramas for comparison and analysis, enriching existing literature as a data source. According to research results, this paper proposes suggestions to create IP brands for folk-sports-themed movies and TV dramas. For the cross-cultural communication of folk sports culture with the help of the TV media industry, this paper provides a theoretical basis and practical guidance.

## **2. Carefully Selected Materials: Rustic and Joyful Game Activities**

Sports-themed movies and TV dramas are common around the world, occupying fixed shares on

the television and screen all year round with the audience's needs and eager anticipation. However, there are few folk-sports-themed works with global influence. "Listen to the silent thunder," the Korean TV series "Squid Game" released in 2021, adopting an original and innovative theme of folk sports as the story background to tell stories, became hugely popular on the network promptly, surprised the audience around the world, received strong responses in cross-cultural communication, and generated sufficient cross-region mobility and openness. As shown in Table 1, "Squid Game" mainly selects six folk sports prototypes, "Red Light, Green Light," "Scratch Sugar Cookies," "Tug-of-War," "Play Marbles," "Cross the Glass Bridge," and "Squid Game."

Table 1: Prototype analysis of the six folk sports

title	content	rule	attribute
Red Light, Green Light	must cross the line at the other end of the stadium within specified time	when the set "leader" constantly looks back, participants must be stationary	a sport of chasing and running, testing the ability to start and stop in haste
Scratch Sugar Cookies	scratch a sugar cookie with a specific pattern from an entire round sugar cookie within a specified time	the pattern of the scratched sugar cookie must be intact	Manual activity, exercising the flexibility and stability of hand muscles
Tug-of-War	each side of the competition holds one end of the rope to wrestle. The one continuing to move backwards wins.	The side that is pulled across the center line is beaten.	confrontational activity of collective strength, testing teamwork ability
Play Marbles	win others' marbles by means of throwing, striking, and other techniques within a specified time	violent means such as snatch is forbidden	testing the accuracy of throwing and the sense of space
Cross the Glass Bridge	select right supports to step on and cross to the other end of the glass bridge within a specified time	only the one choose the right stepping support at each step can he pass the competition	testing abilities of prediction, judgment, and body balance
Squid Game	in a pattern of squid, the attacker breaks through blockades of the defense and crosses from the waist to the head of the squid pattern to win.	no limit to the fighting process, and if the attacker is pushed outside the squid pattern sidelines, he loses.	an activity of fighting and competition, comprehensively testing physical skills

## 2.1. Glamour of Games of Folk Sports Themes

Folk sports refer to entertainment activities extensively spread and inherited among the general public, with characteristics of national, era, and game. They are usually the main fun projects during childhood. Games are emotional places based on collective memory [15]. Gameplay is the soul of folk sports and the spiritual kernel of people conducting physical and mental entertainment activities. The game process is to win the game rewards by constantly defeating opponents with luck and strength under specific rules. The gameplay of folk sports is pure and enthusiastic, with convenient venues, simple rules, and distinct outcomes. Game rewards and punishments are mostly symbolic and spiritual, which can greatly fulfill everyone's sense of participation and experience of victory. Gameplay is a common attribute of folk sports in various ethnic groups and regions. Most games focus on physical exertion and competition, while intellectual factors are often not the key to winning.

Choosing folk sports as the narrative theme of TV dramas has a unique dramatic charm of pleasing and releasing pressure, which tallies with the audience's consumer psychology of seeking

entertainment and gameplay, involves the audience in imitation game structures, and evokes their emotions such as happiness and anger [16]. For example, the rules of the folk sport "Red Light, Green Light" are: pick an empty field; select a "leader" from the group by any method, such as finger-guessing, volunteering, or recommendation by all; the "leader" shouts "One, Two, Three, Wooden Man" to everyone at one end of the field, and the others wait for opportunities to move forward to the "leader" from the other end; when the "leader" turns back towards the others at any time, they must be motionless like "wood;" the one who moves will be out of the game; before starting, everyone can discuss the time limit and specific punishment measures for each round; during the game, the "leader" can arbitrarily change his speech speed and the frequency of turning around, and others can adjust the stride and cadence of their progress. The activity has a high degree of freedom. Every participant has the probability of winning or losing. People who will admit their defeats if they lose accept their punishments joyfully. The scene is full of pleasure and excitement. Therefore, childhood playmates can make appointments to meet and enjoy the game at any time. The specific property and intrinsic imprint of the "gameplay" of folk sports build a natural bond for getting close to and interesting the audience. As the material of TV dramas, folk sports are always sought-after and sympathetic.

## 2.2. Social Benefits of Folk Sports Themes

In this modern materialistic society with pervasive technologies, people crazily chase the unpredictable future era while feeling nostalgic for the "pure and simple" past era. The social benefits of folk-sports-themed works are mainly reflected in the following aspects: first, the aftertaste and inspiration with multiple implications. Folk sports can retain the innocence of childhood, arouse the purity and kindness of the secular, cure the hardships of adults, and motivate "teenagers running after the wind" to continuously run freely and easily. Under these multiple implications, folk-sports-themed TV dramas have become one of the strongest texts to complement society. Second, folk sports have multidimensional educational effects, such as simulating the real environment or the adult world, developing people's thinking ability and flexibility, training people's physical qualities and skills, and improving people's sense of teamwork and rules. In TV dramas with powerful promotional and leading features, using folk sports to tell stories can best manifest social responsibility and most easily penetrate people's hearts.

The TV series "Squid Game" selected several popular folk sports in South Korea in the 1980s, including the "Red Light, Green Light," group competition of speed and courage; the "Scratch Sugar Cookies," personal hand-making challenge; the "Tug-of-War," strength competition of teamwork; the "Play Marbles," pitching far and accurately; the "Cross the Glass Bridge," guessing footholds; and the "Squid Game," fierce confrontation. The above game activities can boost the good development of participants' physical quality, intelligence, and social communication and promote participants' prediction and judgment ability and life philosophy [17]. Therefore, the release of folk-sports-themed TV dramas spreads the truth, goodness, and beauty of folk customs. It educates and guides the audience to become interested in folk sports and to personal practice and participate extensively in real life. While promoting the audience's physical and mental health in entertainment, it has also brought about new points of economic increase. With the popularity of the TV series "Squid Game," offline-related game experience stores are scrambling to open everywhere. Its derived fan economy has soared. The sales of its enabled brand products have been heading up. Moreover, the realistic society crises revealed in the drama [18] once stimulated the nerves of social reform.

### 2.3. Cultural Inspiration of Folk Sports Themes

During modernization and globalization, the originally varied multi-ethnic nationalities on earth have gradually lost their unique cultural samples. Therefore, the calling for multiculturalism and preserving historical and cultural heritage has become the strongest voice of all ethnic groups in this era. Folk sports are cultural heritage passed down from generation to generation, with profound historical and cultural connotations, which are also essential carriers for delivering national cultural genes and building national cultural coordinates. On the one hand, watching folk sports can satisfy the need to hunt for novelty in local folk customs; on the other hand, it can investigate cultural codes embedded in a certain group. Meanwhile, it is an important way to interpret the development of a specific national civilization. Folk sports are the most vivid and powerful physical expression and recognizable cultural mark. Therefore, in contrast with the convergence and unification of Olympic sports-themed works, TV dramas with folk sports themes possess strong cultural attraction and inspiration. Moreover, from the perspective of "human cultural universality," human society can generate similar and identical folk sports cultures at a certain stage of development [19]. Therefore, all ethnic groups have similar folk sports. This theme is extremely easy to evoke emotional and cultural resonance with the people of the world.

South Korea always values the inheritance and development of its national culture. From the declaration of various world intangible cultural heritages to the cultural protection and promotion of the Korean language, Hanbok, and Korean food, they all present the "Korean Wave" posture to the world. Therefore, it is reasonable for Korean folk sports to be used as the material of TV dramas to spread legacy and accumulate old habits to custom. Besides focusing on the six folk sports in South Korea, the hit drama "Squid Game" also features a game of people waving arms and "playing cartoons" as a cushion and prelude to the plot. In addition, the male protagonists in the series mentioned more than ten folk sports, such as hawks catching chickens, jumping rubber bands, catching stones, and hide and seek. Although these folk sports appeared in TV dramas as bedding and embellishments, they expanded the cultural perception of the audience and strengthened their cultural identification to some extent. The TV series presents childhood games that played by the generation of the male lead in a retro re-enactment manner. The audience's immersive viewing forms a sense of presence across time and space. They can personally feel the true charm of folk sports. The game name "Red Light, Green Light" was literally translated into Korean as "hibiscus flowers are blooming." The hibiscus flower has been further recognized as the national flower of Korea by the world, and the promotion of the Korean language has also set off an upsurge. "Squid Game" undoubtedly gives a fillip to the world to popularize Korean culture and tell Korean stories.

### 3. Innovative Narrative: Trendy Expression of Pluralism Coexistence

In the era of globalization and prosperity of the physical culture and sports industry, sports-themed TV dramas have never been far from the audience's visual field. Playwrights in the world keep creating. However, there are few works with substantial leverage. In recent years, as a giant sports country, the United States has created many inspirational sports-themed TV dramas, such as "Friday Night Lights," "One Tree Hill," and "Blue Mountain State." As a major sports country, China has released more than ten TV dramas on winter sports, such as "Snow Pear Stewed with Rock Sugar," "Glory on Ice," "Team Ice and Snow," "Unrivaled on Ice," and "Rose on Ice." However, because of the normalization and simplification of storytelling, there are no new striking works. At this time, the innovative narrative and pluralistic coexistence of the burst TV drama "Squid Game" impressed hundreds of millions of viewers in network time, reaching a new height in terms of the heat of topics, influence depth, and driving power to related industries.

### 3.1. Multiple Orientations of Nostalgia

"Comeback of childishness," "childhood reminiscence," and "reproduction of childish tastes" are consistent orientations in the narrative of "Squid Game." The multiple reminiscent situational dialogues, the organization of several folk sports, and various complex psychological activities all reflect and strengthen the hero's nostalgia. The guiding and organization of the entire game are dedicated to reliving the experience of "the old man with a tumor," trying to awaken his vague physical memory and guiding the audience's psychological and value orientations to a large extent. When the male lead Seong Gi-hun met "the old man with a tumor" in front of a supermarket, he recalled the past scenes of warming up beside a stove and dining. When participating in the "Scratch Sugar Cookies" game, he interpreted himself that he often lost umbrellas when he was young and was beaten for this by his mother, so he chose the umbrella shape. When taking part in the last round of "Squid Game," he remembered the scene of playing with his friends in his childhood. By participating in various childhood games, the hero fulfilled his attachment to the past. By recalling various scenes, the hero displayed his nostalgia, further emphasizing the theme of "nostalgia" and extending the layout of the entire story to multiple directions. As the theme of the story, "nostalgia" touches everyone's soul and easily resonates with the audience spiritually and emotionally. Furthermore, real examples of folk sports can evoke people's imagination of multiple implications, such as "beautiful traditions," "innocent friendship," "ingenuous youth," and "happy childhood," which are the condensation and sublimation of daily nostalgia.

### 3.2. Pluralistic Oppositions of the Story

Taking folk sports as the point of penetration, "Squid Game" constructs a grand and intertwined storyline with pluralistic oppositions, including the confrontation of rustic games and gunshot violence, the comparison between cheerful childhood and distressed adulthood, the integration of traditional entertainment and electronic technologies, the coupling of resplendent scenery and bloody mess, and the coexistence of valuing feeling and brotherhood and cunning schemes. In the TV drama, the playful folk sports escalated into a vital killing game with dramatic shifts between victory and defeat. Participants who had quit returned to the game. Simple game forms were arranged in pairs with electronic technology devices. Arbiters in pink jumpsuits faced participants in green sportswear suits. Coffin boxes with pink bows were filled with bloody innocent bodies. The ups and downs of the story, the unexpected development of events, and the ultimatum game between the good and evil in human nature all intensified "dramatic conflicts" [20] and continuously reinforced the psychological lag of the audience, enhancing the charm of the drama and the electrifying experience of the audience. Taking the "Tug-of-War" game as an example, which was a team competition on a high tower, the team with significantly weaker physiques and physical strengths overcame the disadvantages and won the game through a series of operations, such as tactical coordination, strategy application, and corporate effort. The losers fell down to the bottom of the lofty tower. The aspiration and desperation, safety and horror, and survival and being murdered during this period made the audience experience participants' mixed feelings and breathtaking moments. Moreover, the existence of opposites and the explication of contradictions in the story deepen the audience's impression of "Tug-of-War" on the basis of disclosing the twofold existence of angels and demons in human nature.

### 3.3. Multidimensional Combination of Modern Elements

TV series with a sense of the times, science and technology, and other fashion elements can not only meet the online generation's need for entertainment but also obtain affections from young

audiences, ultimately winning tremendous worldwide viewing enthusiasm. Obviously, the Korean TV series "Squid Game" has succeeded at this. While organizing original and simple games, it applied digital technologies such as intelligent identification and electronic operation, designed a most recognizable painting style, built artistic and fantasy scenes, and interrupted the extravagant life of today's capital giants. The infrared identification system precisely shot and killed every loser in the event. The ones in red supervising the execution of the game held advanced firearms. The automatic computing system and clearly visible monitoring system in the control room backstage, and the luxurious room scenery where "VIP guests" watching the event, the combination of these multidimensional modern elements enhanced the visual impact of "Squid Game," gave consideration to the characteristics of the broadcasting and spreading of the Internet and financial media, and provided a modernized context for the innovative expression of folk sports. The "fashionable" element design and "innovative" element expression transformed the traditional representation of folk-sports-themed TV dramas, endowed them with a scientific and technological atmosphere and an aura of the new generation, connected them with contemporary life, interpreted the concepts of the times, thus meeting the aesthetic needs of modern people and promoting multi-media transmission.

#### **4. Devote to Ethics: Ultimate Thinking of Where Human Beings Can Go**

Ethics is the principle of human morality. Ethical dramas represent dramas that combine real life to tell about the ethical plots of social relationships between people and people, people and society, and people and families. Referring to "Squid Game," through the bizarre story that a group of adults struggling with their lives attempted to participate in sport games and win a huge bonus of up to 45.6 billion won, the drama aims to reflect on family ethics, social ethics, criminal ethics, and sports ethics. This section intends to analyze the script from the perspective of "sports ethics" and discuss the following topics: jungle rules, power games, and human nature.

##### **4.1. Jungle Rules of Only the Strong Survive**

The capitalist society advocates "zero-sum games" and "jungle rules." There is a basic setting of natural selection and survival of the fittest, which means the law of biological evolution extends to social life in the form of social Darwinism [21]. Under the guidance of this theory, the concepts and behaviors in the game, such as craftiness, partisanship, and winner-take-all, are ethical and not against morality. Accordingly, the scenes in "Squid Game" of participants maliciously slandering and killing each other to win are not shameful, making the lovely and beautiful children's games a dirty "dark fairy tale" in the adult world. In the "Pinball" game, the plot that "Cho Sang-woo" deceived the kind "Ali" and won complies with the rules. In the "Crossing the Glass Bridge" game, those spiteful actions that push people down the bridge to death will not be blamed. The dark "jungle rules" approve of using all insidious means for fame and fortune and acquiesce in various indulgent actions of powerful people. If it is extended to the real sports arena, "analeptic," "fake age," and other behaviors for winning will naturally breed. The "unfair refereeing," "hidden hand," and other capital-operated manipulations behind the scenes will run amuck in the world. To a certain extent, the "jungle rules" are the law of nature, animals, and violence. Under the law, human competition will be caught in the cycle of a fast knot of "you lose, I win; you more, I less; and you die, I live." However, the ascendance of human beings is the ability to sublimate the physical laws of animal nature and raise the brutal competition of biological nature to the competition of orderly, legal, and civilized human nature. From this view, the process and objective of modern sports have evolved into the principles of friendship supremacy, fairness supremacy, and peace supremacy.

## 4.2. Game Rules Dominated by Power

Rules dominated by power only serve the interests of power. Games under power rules are only a tool for power's entertainment and a means of achieving capital accumulation. "The game of power" has absurd "ethical logic for the powerhouse." The game organizers in "Squid Game" claimed that "they strove to create an equal world. Participants voluntarily registered. The game implementation process pursued fairness and justice, and rewards were given to the winner as agreed." The powerhouse considered their actions the "redemption" and "charity" for the toiling masses. Capitalists who indulged in money and entertainment ignored living human life and equated "people" in real life with "horses" on the racetrack. Therefore, they established the violent rule of killing the eliminated people. To increase the excitement of the game, they even set up violent game links such as group strafing, falling to death, and fighting with knives. It makes people associate it with "The Coliseum," where carnivals and sufferings coexisted in the Roman Empire. Parallelism is "the revelry of the powerhouse and the suffering of the bottom masses." In the sports business affected by contemporary political and commercial culture, scandals such as gambling, matchmaking, and commercial bribery frequently occur. Under the political or capital power, sports business will certainly break fair game rules and make it difficult to purely protect sport spirits and respect athlete values. The game rules dominated by power are domineering, forcing players to accept [22]. The preached ethics fool the masses. The spiritual world of the powerhouse is utilitarian and twisted. They seem not to be constrained by any laws or political regulations [23]. "Squid Game" discloses the unjust and inhuman "game of the power" in the name of sport games, aiming to condemn unfair game rules dominated by the powerhouse in the real world.

## 4.3. Human Ultimate Aim of Benevolence, Justice, Courtesy, and Wisdom

In the last episode of "Squid Game," the dying old man "Oh Il-nam" kept asking the hero Seong Gi-hun the question, "Do you still believe in people?" With the attitude of choosing "believing," Seong Gi-hun finally witnessed a drunkard who fell into the snow rescued by "kind" passersby. In the drama, under the dual pressure of death threats and money temptations, 456 participants fully displayed "the malicious side of human nature," reflecting the essence and bottom line of "benevolence, justice, courtesy, and wisdom." The Chinese sage of Confucianism, Mencius, proposed the theory that "human nature is good." In "Mencius Gaozi," "Everyone has a heart of compassion, shame, respect, and right and wrong; the heart of compassion, benevolence; the heart of shame, justice; the heart of respect, courtesy; the heart of right and wrong, wisdom. Benevolence, justice, courtesy, and wisdom are not caused by external factors but inherent in our nature [24]." The hero Seong Gi-hun, played by Lee Jung-jae, was debt-ridden and led a dog's life, desperately needing the game bonus to make a living. However, in the entire play, he tried to protect the injured "Kang Sae-byeok" and returned to rescue his childhood playmate "Cho Sang-woo" when he was just one step away from victory, reflecting his benevolence. After winning the huge bonus, he felt guilty and could not forgive himself; from beginning to end, he detested the capital that hosted the game, revealing his justice. Throughout the game, he respected the participating "old man," displaying his courtesy. At last, he determinedly gave up his trip to visit his relatives in the United States and chose to terminate the evil game of "killing the eliminated ones," representing his wisdom. Nowadays, the phenomenon of capital supremacy and heartlessness is still floating in some countries. However, the human nature of innocence, purity, and kindness has never come out of our sight. Just like the title of the fifth episode, "A World of Equality," director Hwang Dong-hyuk also wants to place his best wishes in this violent dystopian TV drama [25]. The motto of the modern Olympic Games added "More united" after "faster, higher, and stronger," aiming to motivate human beings to advance hand in hand and call for the human nature of "benevolence,



justice, courtesy, and wisdom."

## **5. Reflection and Enlightenment: Creating IP Brands of Folk-Sports-Themed Movies and TV Dramas**

Compared with South Korea, folk sports in other countries are diverse and also contain the physical narrative and spiritual expression of ancient ancestors of ethnic groups. They all are valuable historical and cultural heritage of humans. However, how to learn from the successful experience of the TV series "Squid Game" and do well in the cross-cultural dissemination of folk sports is an opportunity and challenge for all TV and movie workers. The significance of this study is represented by how to make the best of folk sports resources, leverage the manufacture and broadcasting modes of streaming media platform that is becoming mainstream [26], compose literary and artistic works that reflect national sports interests, and disseminate the dazzling and bizarre folk sports culture to the world.

### **5.1. Anchoring the Orientation of Cross-cultural Communication of Folk Sports Culture**

The release of "Squid Game" boosts a trend of the "Korean Wave" in the garden where world cultures are competing to bloom. Under the fermentation and dissemination of the entire media, global audiences naturally list the folk sports culture such as "Red Light, Green Light," "Play Marbles," and "Play Cartoons" into the impression category of "Korean culture," retaining the cultural mark of "Korean Wave." When facing possible cultural gaps or deficiencies in the folk sports culture of countries in modern society, the South Korean director Huang Donghe successfully conducted a cultural record and dissemination using literary and artistic works. It is undoubtedly a successful model. Since folk sports culture has national symbiosis, all the "folk sports" involved in this TV series are common in China. It indicates that the cross-cultural dissemination of Chinese folk sports culture should follow the times and accelerate the pace of progress.

Folk sports culture is lively, vivid, and bizarre, with a unique human historic significance and physical intuition. It is a universal language connecting the human world, which plays a prominent cultural coordinate role in elucidating national spirit, displaying national style, and condensing national community consciousness. Folk sports reflect the social history, politics, economy, culture, religion, customs, and psychology of the native country to a certain extent. They are splendid cultural treasures of the native nation [27]. Therefore, we can explore the cross-cultural dissemination of folk sports culture from the following aspects: First, through sports events, folk sports documentaries, and other means to profoundly present the specific phenomenon of folk sports, refine and depict the spiritual map of folk sports, and expand the scope of worldwide audiences of folk sports culture. Second, take cultivating talents of literary, cultural, and sports in the new era as an opportunity to effectively unearth, collate, and classify folk sports cultural resources, and guarantee the creation of literary and artistic works and projects of relative topics. Third, take into account the advantages of traditional and modern media, draw support from cross-regional event platforms such as the Asian Games and the Olympic Games, design a national folk sports cultural card through news reports, online celebrity VLOGs, notable commentaries, and other ways, to expand the dissemination scope and depth of folk sports materials. Fourth, innovate the presentation of folk sports by means of science and technology, and enhance the sense of participation and experience in folk sports, thus expanding the application scenarios of folk sports.

## 5.2. Promoting Innovative Development Paths for Folk-Sports-Themed Movies and TV Dramas

Taking China as an example, with Chinese characteristics in the new era is striding towards the goal of a "sports power." The demand of the times to tell a good story of Chinese sports and propagate well the voice of Chinese sports on the international stage is stronger than ever before. In the General Secretary's speech at the symposium on literary and artistic works, he particularly pointed out that "let foreigners deepen and enhance their understanding of China by appreciating the works of Chinese writers and artists [28]." Therefore, as the primary position and forefront in the dissemination of sports culture, movies and TV dramas of folk sports themes should play a typical exemplary and leading role. Since the 21st century, folk-sports-themed movies and TV dramas are still disadvantaged in the entire international film and television industry, of which the highlights are not conspicuous and the impact is not profound. How to break through the industry barriers of the hedge of material selection, vulgar narrative, and cheesy production, meet the needs of worldwide audiences in the era of globalization, media integration, and digitalization, and create high-quality works with international influence is one of the most critical issues to be solved.

For folk-sports-themed movies and TV dramas to take steps for cross-cultural communication, at the macro level, it should emphasize integrating and optimizing industry resources, actively create readable texts [29], and adhere to people-centered creation orientation. At the micro level, it should pay attention to the following specific aspects: First, we should expand the selection range. Besides competitive sports such as the Olympic Games and winter sports, mass sports and folk sports that are closely related to the people also should be listed as key selection materials. Second, we should enhance the narrative characters of works, blend in more dramatic and psychologically contradictory plots, stimulate the audience's on-site experience, and evoke the audience's episodic memory and emotional sympathy. Third, we should enrich connotations, integrate elements such as ethical dramas, spy dramas, love dramas, and idol dramas into plots, and infiltrate realities and social illnesses, making the audience have extensive and profound spiritual shaking, life perception, and social reflection. Fourth, we should emphasize the new media, adopt technologies of digital imaging and modern information broadcasting, and make good use of intelligent feedback technology and media platforms that interact with audiences, thus satisfying the audience's needs in the new era.

## 6. Conclusions

From a perspective of creation, the popularity and the successful "breaking circles" of the Korean folk-sports-themed TV drama "Squid Game" on the internet give credit to the grand narrative and plot arrangement centering on the theme of folk sports. From a communication perspective, it is due to the network expansion effects and video production technologies of "Netflix" global streaming media platform. The innovative development of folk-sports-themed films and TV dramas and the entire TV drama industry should learn from the success of the global popular drama. This study is inadequate in lacking case comparisons to verify the rationality of the analysis. The author will further focus on the broadcast of global folk-sports-themed TV dramas and also look forward to the second series of "Squid Game."

However, from the perspective of communication value, the educational significance and social effects transmitted by TV dramas cannot be ignored. For instance, discuss the relevant impact of "Squid Game" on young people's gambling concepts and behaviors, consider political and ideological issues involving racism. Therefore, it needs to be sternly warned that literary and art workers around the world should adhere to the moral bottom line of the film and television industry while striving to innovate and develop. They should abandon works only aiming for popularity and

ignoring sportsmanship and firmly resist theme dramas that relate to vulgar, violent, and other harmful effects on adolescents. Meanwhile, we should watch out for works that expose the suffering of the bottom to please bourgeois peepers. Generally, worldwide TV industry workers should adhere to integrity and innovation, adopt folk themes, target the audience worldwide, disseminate national stories, and create outstanding works with distinctive characteristics.

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