

Influence of Living Abroad on People in General and Their Clothing Style: A Case Study of Koreans

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해외체류경험이 소비자의 일반적 특성과 의복스타일에 미치는 영향: 한국인의 경우

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Abstract

As globalization has been accelerating in recent years, more people have opportunities to live abroad for an extended period of time, which is known to have strong influence on consumers. The main purposes of this study were to examine if and how sojourning experience could bring changes to people in general and in clothing styles with focus on Korean adults. The researchers conducted in-depth interviews on a total of thirty-six women and twenty-one men who lived in foreign countries more than two years and have been back in Korea longer than one year. The major results indicated that in addition to personalities, age, length of stay, activities during stay, gender, and cultural distances played important roles in bringing long-term changes on people. Re-established self-identity, changes in values, and openness toward diversity were major common changes observed in the interviewees. In addition, they became educated consumers with good knowledge of diverse brands and prices, and emphasized value as opposed to price. Changes in clothing styles were noted mainly among women. They placed high importance on having their own style, coordination and appropriateness, which were consistent with the general changes. Influences of different cultures were also noted.

Key words: Living abroad, Self-identity, Diversity, Clothing style, Korean culture; 해외체류경험, 정체성, 다양성, 의복스타일, 한국문화

I. Introduction

Globalization in the recent era has increased the opportunities to live abroad for an extended period of time, which differs from other face-to-face cross-cultural contacts such as immigration or international tour in several aspects. Most importantly, people who go abroad to stay for an extended period of time face the burden of conflicting expectations.

Unlike tourists, they usually stay in the new culture long enough that they are expected to get acquainted with and make adjustments to the host culture. At the same time, in contrast to immigrants, they are also expected to retain the links to their home culture and make re-adjustment when they return.

Most research related to sojourning experience dealt with adjustment process and the predictors of adjustments(Matsumoto et al., 2001; Ward et al.,

1998), and very few studies examined the possible effects of sojourning experiences. One stream of research on sojourning effects involves around “multicultural man” proposed by Adler(1977). The other stream of sojourning effect research focused on relatively short-term consequences of sojourning, particularly among school children(for an example, Furukawa, 1997).

The previous studies demonstrated that sojourning could be a great source of changes in people undergoing such experiences. But surprisingly few researchers have attempted to investigate the relationship between living abroad and different aspects of consumer behavior, particularly long-term effects of living abroad after transition periods. Thus, it is necessary to explore whether or not living abroad may have effects on consumers in long term, and if so, how their effects are reflected in overall consumer behavior and more specifically in clothing styles.

Clothing is one of the most universal and personal forms of communication through which individuals express themselves to other members of society (Kaiser, 1990). Clothing serves as a symbolic metaphor of the relationship of an individual to cultural system(Hamilton & Hamilton, 1989). Furthermore, clothing selection is a prime indicator of the social influences on consumer behavior and represents a dynamic process how consumers use products to express self-image, and role position(Miller, et al., 1993). Thus, it deemed reasonable to assume that clothing styles of individuals will reflect any influences that living abroad experience may have on people.

This research investigated the experiences of Koreans, while the most previous studies examined a limited number of countries. During the past few decades, Korea has undergone dynamic changes from a traditional agrarian society to a highly industrialized country. In spite of the tremendous changes in its economic and social structures, however, traditional values with strong influence of Confucian teachings have remained in the characteristics of the Korean people and their society(Kim^a, 1991). Koreans have a high degree of

consciousness of order (authoritarianism) and conformity(collectivism), which are related to the lack of clear self-identity or differentiation from others(Kim^b, 1991). According to Hofstede(1985), Korea is positioned in a culture where people tend to emphasize ‘we’ as opposed to ‘I’ and ‘they’, and relationship with others.

Therefore, this research attempted to examine if and how sojourning experience could bring changes to people in general and in clothing styles. Specifically, the following questions related to living abroad experiences were explored in this research: (1) what factors determine whether or not living abroad experiences may bring long-term changes in people?; (2) what are the possible changes from living abroad in general?; (3) what are the possible changes in clothing styles that may be related to living abroad experience? Since there has been little research related to these research questions, qualitative interview method was used in this exploratory study with Korean men and women.

II. Literature Review

1. Research on Effects of Living Abroad

A few studies have examined possible effects of living abroad experience, while relatively large number of researchers studied adjustment and re-adjustment processes during the transition periods of sojourners. Widely known with regards to the effects of sojourning experience is “multicultural man” suggested by Adler(1977). Multicultural man, produced by complex interactions of cross-cultural experiences, is psychologically adaptive, ever undergoing personal transitions, and thus is always in the process of becoming a part of and apart from a given cultural context. In addition, Brislin(1981) suggested that multicultural experience brings increases in world mindedness and decline in authoritarianism. Even though the idea of multicultural man was scarcely based on empirically strong research, the concept, intuitively reasonable, was well-received. More recently, however, Sparrow(2000) challenged

that the multicultural man is heavily based on anglo-male experiences, and the cases of women and people of color could be quite different. Based on the interviews of twenty men and women, Sparrow found that multicultural experience brings in the "integrative" process of identity in women, while Adler(1977) and the others(Bennett, 1993; Brislin, 1981) proposed the "in-between attitudes" of multicultural man.

While the discussion on multicultural man focused on long-term effects of sojourning experiences, some researchers focused on short-term effects, more specifically behavioral and academic problems of returning children in their school. Some studies found that sojourning experiences were not significantly related with negative outcomes in classroom behavior or academic achievements(Ory et al., 1991; Tamura & Furnham, 1993a) while others reported negative effects of sojourning not only in short-term but also in long run(Kidder, 1992; Lagrone, 1978).

In summary, previous studies often show inconclusive or inconsistent results on the various outcomes of living abroad experiences. Weakness of previous literature on the effects of living abroad could be attributed to limited geographical locations and sample characteristics, lack of longitudinal studies and failure to build research onto the implications of previous studies(Church, 1982). Many studies were limited to studying a small number of countries and almost exclusively children/adolescents and students.

2. Culture and Consumption

McCracken(1986) has demonstrated how consumption is related to culture and cultural meanings are transferred to consumer goods and individual consumers. Even though culture is one of the most influential factors on consumers, and cross-cultural experiences would have increasingly dramatic effects on consumers for the coming years (Andreasen, 1990), surprisingly little research has attempted to relate cross-cultural experiences to any types of consumer behavior.

Exception to the lack of research in this area is the growing interests on role of ethnicity and acculturation in consumer behavior as some ethnic groups are receiving increasing attentions in their countries. Several studies examined how different levels of acculturation and ethnicity were related to product attribute importance(Faber et al., 1987; O'guinn & Faber, 1986), food consumption(Kim et al., 1990; Wallendorf & Reilly, 1983), shopping orientation (Shim & Chen, 1996), overall consumption patterns (Penaloza, 1994), and usage of ethnic dress(Forney & Rabolt, 1985-6). But, all these research dealt with immigrants whose cross-cultural experiences are quite different from those of living abroad for a limited time.

III. Methods

1. Interviewees

Since this study attempted to examine the long-term effects of sojourning experience, interviewees included only those who lived in foreign countries more than two years, and have been back in Korea longer than one year. A total of thirty-six women and twenty-one men in Korea were interviewed in our study and their brief profiles are listed in table 1. All interviewees except seven women were married at the time of our interviews, all of them graduated from college, and some of them had Ph.D's or professional degrees.

2. Interview Procedure

Two researchers conducted interviews separately. Some interviews, but not all were recorded, because not all interviewees granted their permission for recording. Thus, in many cases outlines were taken during the interviews, and detailed interview notes were constructed later. Interviewees received the following questions and brief description of the research before the interview; (1) What did you notice when you first went to foreign country? (2) Do you feel that you have changed in any ways by

having lived abroad? If so, can you explain it? (3)
Can you think of any changes in the way you dress
and the styles you like? Researchers met with inter-

viewees one to three times, and each interview lasted
about two to four hours.

The researchers often met for debriefing and dis-

Table 1. Profiles of Interviewees.

Inter- viewees	Country	Length of Sojourn (years)	Age		Occupation During Sojourn
			When Started Sojourning	At Interview	
<Women>					
L1	USA	8	27	40	house wife
L2	HongKong, Japan, Malaysia	8	27	40	house wife
L3	Japan, USA	10	11, 23	34	student
L4	France	4	25	32	house wife
L5	UK, USA	2	33	39	house wife
L6	Spain	3	24	36	house wife
L7	France, Ivory coast	4	36	42	house wife
L8	USA	8	8, 16	33	student
L9	USA, UK	9	36, 58	63	house wife
L10	USA	15	31	48	real estate broker
L11	Iran, USA, Canada, UK, Norway	16	16	44	house wife
L12	USA	11	27	42	student, house wife
L13	Germany	10	28	53	student
L14	France	4	45	54	manager
L15	Australia	4.5	33	40	house wife
L16	Japan	7	35	39	house wife
L17	Japan	2.5	47	57	house wife
L18	Italy	5	26	38	student
L19	USA	10	27	41	office worker
L20	Germany, Japan	11	24	39	house wife
L21	USA, Japan	6	11	25	student
L22	Italy	3	25	30	student
L23	UK, Swiss	14	14	44	student
L24	USA	10	27	46	student, manager
L25	Thailand	5	35	44	house wife
L26	Russia, Poland	6	34	41	house wife
L27	France	5	25	37	student
L28	France	6	26	43	student
L29	Japan	4	27	41	student
L30	USA	3	24	31	student
L31	Germany, Netherland	14	23	40	student
L32	Taiwan	5	26	38	student
L33	HongKong	5	36	44	house wife
L34	USA	4	26	43	banker
L35	Canada	6	17	27	student
L36	USA, France	6	20	28	student

Table 1. Continued.

Inter- viewees	Country	Length of sojourn (years)	Age		Occupation During Sojourn
			When Started Sojourning	At Interview	
<Men>					
G1	USA	12	33	46	student, researcher
G2	Canada	7	17	31	student, office worker
G3	Germany, USA	12	28, 37	46	student, graphic designer
G4	France	3	32	37	government officer
G5	India	4	35	46	manager
G6	Saudi Arabia, USA	4	28	42	manager
G7	Taiwan	2	23	31	student
G8	France	6.5	23	31	student, designer
G9	France	7	26	44	student
G10	Germany, Japan	11	28	43	student
G11	Italy	12	25	44	student
G12	UK	6	26	38	student
G13	Brazil, USA, France	32	10	45	architect
G14	USA	8	23	37	student
G15	USA	10	28	43	student, researcher
G16	Brazil, USA	19	13	46	office worker, student
G17	USA, Japan	3	36	44	medical doctor
G18	Japan	10	28	40	student
G19	Australia	4	36	43	office worker
G20	USA	15	33	50	student, researcher
G21	Vietnam	4	24	30	tour guide

cussed the processes and contents of interviews. Since the research relied on self-reports, extra efforts were made to verify and triangulate the results. Whenever possible, the interviewees were asked to show their pictures before and after their sojourns, and the pictures or actual items of their favorite clothes or souvenirs.

IV. Results

1. Factors Related to Changes

1) Age at the time of stay

Age was one of the most important factors determining whether living abroad experience could result in any lasting changes. The interviewees who went

abroad before college seemed to have absorbed the host cultures without conscious efforts and large parts of them were internalized. Young(L8) who went to a high school in US remembers how lonely she was in her class, which could happen to any American girls when they transfer to new schools. Her friends and herself agree that she is very straight forward and "out-spoken", which is not typical for Korean women. She feels she owes such characteristics to her experience of having lived in the US when she was young.

Those who went abroad as adults were able to articulate what they liked and disliked about the host cultures, and the process of selective adoption took place much more easily and to a larger extent when they were young adults. When they went abroad at a relatively older age(around thirty-five years old or above),

they observed the foreign cultures as much as the younger ones, and they might have adjusted themselves to the culture, but the adjustments were likely to be peripheral and temporary. Thus, when they returned to Korea, they were less likely to maintain the changes. In some extreme cases, they did not attempt to blend in the host cultures, and confined themselves within Korean communities. When two ladies(L9 and L17) went to the UK and Japan at age of 58 and 47, they almost always shopped at the stores where they could speak Korean, had Korean foods, and met almost exclusively Koreans.

2) Length of stay

Length of stay, as expected, made a difference as to whether sojourning could bring changes in people. All our interviewees noticed the differences in other cultures, but when they stayed less than three years, some did not feel any changes in themselves, or even when there were some changes while they were abroad, the changes did not last after a while once they returned to Korea.

On the other hand, more than seven to eight years of sojourning were long enough to bring changes in any people, and the changes remained with the interviewees. When people lived in foreign countries from between two to three and seven to eight years, factors other than the length of stay such as age and what they did during their stay were more significant in explaining if living abroad could bring changes.

3) Activities during their stay

Closely related to the effects of living abroad were the types and the intensity of activities interviewees engaged in outside home while they lived abroad. Different types of activities could include working with local people, schooling, participating in volunteer works or social clubs, shopping, and etc. It was interesting to note that schooling was very powerful, more than any other activity, in bringing changes in people regardless of age.

Kim(G5) worked in India for a trading company where almost all of his co-workers and business partners were Indians. He says that he has gained,

from his stay in India, his first-hand knowledge of the Indian society and people of different socio-economic status. But it never occurred to him that he would mingle with local people or participated in any local events. Of course he never dreamed of trying the Indian costumes even though he thinks they look quite beautiful and comfortable.

Won(G7) went to college while working part-time in a local tea shop in Taiwan for two years. He was quiet and shy before he went to Taiwan, but after he returned his friends thought he became very outgoing. He was elected as the vice president of his student organization and took a leading role in several cultural clubs.

Ki(G6) worked in Saudi Arabia shortly after he graduated from college, and a few years later he went to the US for his master's degree. He without hesitation says that his stay in the US had must stronger influences on him than that in Saudi. It should be pointed, though, that he had limited contacts with local culture in Saudi Arabia, whereas he had far more diverse experiences in the US.

In addition to working and schooling, other types of activities such as joining local social clubs also had effects, only if the interviewees spent enough time on those activities. Sook(L2) was a full-time house wife and went to many parties and social clubs where she had limited contacts with local people when she lived in Hong Kong, Japan and Malaysia. But, when she returned to Korea, she realized that she was so "different" from other Koreans that she could not have meaningful conversations with them for almost a year.

4) Gender differences

Gender differences may deserve some discussion. The female interviewees were more enthusiastic in sharing their sojourning experiences and willing to admit their changes from the experiences than male interviewees. Female interviewees were often able to articulate wide spectrum of cultural differences they noticed. On the other hand, experiences of male interviewees were narrow and they were more reserved in explaining their experiences. Female

interviewees, compared to males, were also more conscientious and willing to admit that sojourning experiences brought changes in them. These gender differences may be attributed to the fact that Korean women might have experienced wider cultural gap in abroad, since Korean society still tend to emphasize women's role subservient to men's, compared to the western societies. At the same time, it has been reported that even in western cultures men are more resistant to interviews than women(Lomas, 2000).

5) *Cultural distance*

The interviewees in this study lived in many different countries, and the cultural distances between those countries and Korea varied. As expected, larger the cultural distances were, more likely the changes occurred. When they lived in Asian countries that are relatively similar to Korea, they did not experience big differences and consequently, they did not undergo noticeable changes.

2. Changes in general

1) *Self-identity re-established*

When people were abroad surrounded by unfamiliarity, they re-examined themselves carefully, and came to accept them as they were, being different from others. Through this process, they seemed to re-discover and re-establish who they were and what they like or don't like. They have strong sense of self-identity, and are less likely to conform. This change may be especially significant among Koreans, since conformity is highly valued in Korean culture.

Kim(L4) who spent four years in the U.S. said that she has become quite proud of herself after seeing many different life styles of Americans, and to her being herself is most important. Lee(L26) who lived in Poland also agree that because her thought are far more important than clothes, she does not need to be concerned about what other people think.

"Being oneself", feeling that they are different from others, continued when they returned to Korea. They did not necessarily try to immerse back into Korean culture. Rather they enjoy being different.

This result does not coincide with the Adler's study(1977) that multicultural experiences bring fluid identity that can be connected to several different cultures.

2) *Changes in values*

This individualistic tendency had direct relationship to what they value in their lives. Many interviewees said that they like to stay free from strict social norms, and value the comfort accompanied with such freedom. Ahn(L9) who has been married to a high government official feels having lived in other countries has enabled her to free herself from following "in" trends and take pride in her life as it is.

Our interviewees also showed tendency to make strong commitment to 'communities' as Adler(1977) noted in multicultural men. They recognize the importance of communities beyond the network of families, friends and close acquaintances in which traditionally Koreans have functioned. For instance, Yoon(L15) and Kim(L31) continue volunteer works in community services which they started while they lived abroad.

The boundaries of communities vary a great deal in our interviewees' minds. They all feel that it is very important to live in harmony with others. Sometimes, it was their families that they realized as the most important "community". Many male interviewees who devoted most of their time to their work in Korea felt that they had to spend more time with their families while they were abroad. To Bae(G18) who lived in Japan, it was the team members that he felt obliged to keep up with.

3) *Openness toward diversity*

As interviewees gained their first-hand knowledge and experience with different cultures and people, they became more open toward diversity, and sometimes actively seek for diverse excitement. This result may be especially noteworthy in our interviewees, since Korea is one of the most homogeneous societies in the world, consisting of one race speaking one language.

Their experience with different culture enhanced

sensitivity toward diversity in all aspects of life including different norms and lifestyles, not to mention different landscapes, skin colors, and cultural forms. They are willing to respect others' way of living and their uniqueness. Jeong(L6) said how shocking it was for her to see that so many people were living together without getting married in Spain at first, but now she would definitely try before getting married if she were to be divorced.

The openness toward diversity was often expressed in the area of aesthetic codes. They ventured out from the fixed set of aesthetic ideals and accepted diverse aesthetic styles. One lady(L11) said that her idea of beauty has become much wider, and beauty is created while presenting different aspects of oneself through dressing up.

This change related to diversity was found stronger among those who lived in western countries compared to those who lived in Asian countries. It is probably because western societies including American culture encourage diversities more than Asian societies. On the other hand, the interviewees(L16, L17, L29, and G18) were stricken by the presence of strong conformity in Japanese society.

4) Changes as consumers

As they had lived in different countries, they encountered wide varieties of products and brand names that they had not known in Korea. Jin(L5) used to wear a well-known Korean designer's dresses before she went to England. But while in England, she became acquainted with various brands and found one favorite French brand that she continues to wear. Hoon(G4) grew fond of wine while he lived in France. He became quite knowledgeable about different wines, and likes to shop around for wines.

They also experienced that many choices are available in wide range of prices to fulfill their needs. So, they have become conscientious of prices and good at comparative shopping. Many of the interviewees said that they would never pay any more than absolute minimum prices for what they buy. They are quite confident at themselves as good shoppers who can evaluate quality critically. Many

said that they look for values, not just low prices. Chang(G10) did not do shopping in Korea, but often went on shopping with his wife while they lived abroad. Now back in Korea he rarely goes out shopping, but whenever he needs something, instead of price, he thinks of value - how long he will use the item, and how important it is to him.

3. Changes Related to Clothing Style

1) Men's cases

It was not easy for our male interviewees to openly talk about their experiences of living abroad, and harder about their clothes. It was not surprising, though, since it has been shown that men generally are hesitant in talking about fashion and clothes, being afraid that they are too ignorant (Lomas, 2000).

Not only most male interviewees were uncomfortable with the subject of clothes, but also actually they had very little to discuss. Almost all of them did not shop for their own clothes either in Korea or abroad no matter how old they were. Sometimes while they were abroad, their parents or families sent clothes from Korea.

There were a few exceptions, though, that are worthy of discussion. Duk(G9) who studied in France is known to be a dandy professor who often experiments with scarves and matching socks. Chung(G11) who lived in Italy dress not much different from other Korean men, but he has developed exquisite taste in leather attaches.

2) Importance of own style (women's case)

The most noticeable change in clothing styles of the ladies was consistent with the most significant change in general, i.e. re-established self-identity. As they felt "being oneself" is the most important to them, they equally felt that it was far more important to have their own style than to follow fashion trends. It does not mean that the ladies were staying out of fashion. They just feel they do not need to worry about the latest fashions or what others think about their clothes because they know what they like and

what fits them best. They are also less concerned about age code in dressing in Korean society. Regardless of their age, they may like to wear jeans and bright-colored clothes, if they feel they fit them good.

3) Importance of coordination and appropriateness (women's case)

As the ladies in general became more open to diverse cultures and social norms, many of them developed their preferences beyond the fixed aesthetic codes, and became more receptive to diverse and flexible styles. And coordination emerged as a primary tool to accommodate diversity and flexibility. One lady(L11) summarized her style as follows:

“After having lived in several different countries, I found the common factor of being beautiful is to dress appropriately according to time, place and occasion and the dress should fit the individual's manner and conversation as well as his/her body. Coordination is critical to be beautiful, coordination among color, design and accessories.”

Different palettes of colors that they had seen abroad seemed to have broadened their own color schemes. Hyun(L4) said that according to her sisters, she has obtained good taste in color while living in France. Another lady(L26) said that colors should be coordinated in order to be stylish and coordinated colors are very pleasing to viewers.

Importance of coordination was related to the idea that one must dress appropriately. Appropriateness encompasses one should dress according to different weather as well as time, place and occasion. Thus, appropriate dressing means that one's clothing style should look right in that particular natural and social surroundings.

“One should not look like being costumed. One must look comfortable in that day's weather and dress according to one's body shape.” (L23)

“I found it is very important to dress appropriately. And coordination is the key.” (L36)

“You can wear sweaters over short sleeved T-shirts at night and then during the day, you take off your sweater and tie it around the waist.” (L9 and L13)

4) Influences of different cultures (women's case)

Different cultures had different influences on the clothing styles of ladies, and the ladies had adopted the most outstanding components of the cultures they lived in. For instance, while all interviewees who lived in European countries emphatically talked about the importance of color coordination, the colors they became to prefer differed. The lady who lived in Spain(L6) became fond of bright colors just as they are shown in Malo's paintings. On the other hand, those(L13, L20, L26, and L31) who lived in other European countries cared for muted color combinations. The lady(L15) who lived in Australia said that dress look really beautiful when they are color-coordinated with nature. Other notable characteristics that many ladies mentioned include casual styles in the American culture, importance of conformity in Japanese society, and importance of comfort and easy-care in Southeast Asian countries.

V. Discussions

Living abroad for a extended period of time is certainly an overwhelming experience to anyone, no matter how well he/she is exposed to different cultures prior to the experience. Previous studies lacked in providing systematic understanding on long-term effects of living abroad, because most of them relied on a small number of cases(Adler, 1977; Furukawa, 1997), and almost always students(Brislin, 1981; Kidder, 1992; Lagrone, 1978). This study included a good number of cases which encompass diverse backgrounds in age, occupation, and geographical locations of stay. The results show that when people live abroad, they tend to re-examine themselves and re-establish their self-identity. They became clearly aware of the differences between them and others in the host culture, but by adopting some elements of host cultures, they are also different from other Koreans. This result may not coincide with the fluid identity that Adler suggested in multicultural man (Adler, 1977), but supports the recent study (Furukawa, 1997) showing that Japanese student returnees do not belong to any one culture.

Knowledge and experience gained in different

countries had made them educated consumers who are aware of many choices varying in quality and prices. Diversity that they are comfortable with is not limited in products and services that they can choose from, but in other aspects of life including different life styles, values and clothing styles. Openness toward diversity may be a natural outcome of any cross-cultural contacts in this globalized world, but their first-hand experience with different cultures and the adjustment they had to make in living abroad must have accelerated awareness of and receptiveness to diversities.

While there are some common factors that can explain the possible outcomes of living abroad, richness narrated during the interviews suggests that living abroad is a multi-faceted experience that should be approached in many different ways. Korean culture itself was a strong force underlying many of the results discussed in this study including gender differences. Apparently, the Korean culture itself was a significant backdrop to our interviewees on how they perceived the host cultures, and what changes have been resulted from their perceptions.

In that sense, it is not surprising that changes related to clothing were observed mainly among the female interviewees, since fashion, to a large extent, still remains as a female's topic in Korean society. Changes with respect to the clothing styles of female interviewees were parallel to their overall changes. As the female interviewees became more aware of themselves with strong sense of self, they were increasingly more concerned about having their own style and less concerned about conforming to others. Also, appropriateness emphasized by many ladies suggests their interests to blend in any situations. Their sojourning experiences might have taught them the importance of adjustment and flexibility, so that they could interact with others in harmony while simultaneously they are assured of their unique self expressed in their own style.

Even though this research points various aspects in possible effects of living abroad experience, its implications are widely open to further questions. First of all, the changes discussed here were self-

reported from the interviewees. In spite of our efforts for triangulation, this research is heavily dependent on self interpretation and recollection of interviewees. Also, the findings in this study may be valid only for Koreans or someone from the type of culture similar to Korea. In addition, it should be pointed again that all interviewees in this study were college graduates. Thus, their sojourning experiences may be quite different from those of different social status. Future research will benefit from more focused and controlled methodological approach to examine how living abroad experience could bring changes in people.

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요 약

지구촌화가 가속되면서 많은 소비자들에게 해외 체류의 기회는 증가하고 있으며, 이러한 해외체류 경험은 소비자들에게 깊은 영향을 미치는 것으로 알려져 있다. 그럼에도 불구하고, 해외체류경험이 소비자들에게 장기적으로는 어떠한 영향을 미치는지에 대한 연구는 부족한 상태이다. 따라서 이 연구에서는 해외체류경험이 소비자에게 미치는 영향과 관련된 변인들과 경험에 따라 나타나는 소비자들의 일반적인 변화와 의복스타일의 변화를 고찰하였다. 연구를 위하여 해외에서 2년 이상 체류하고 귀국한지 1년이 지난 36명의 여성과 21명의 남성을 심층 면접하였다. 연구결과에 따르면, 개인적인 특성이외에도 연령, 체류기간, 체류시 활동, 문화의 차이 등이 장기적인 변화의 유무와 관련이 깊은 것으로 나타났다. 또한 정체성의 재발견, 다양성의 추구, 확대된 집단 의식이 공통적으로 나타난 일반적인 변화였다. 쇼핑과 관련되어서는 주로 여성들에게서 변화가 감지되었는데, 여성들은 자신을 가치를 추구하고 다양한 브랜드와 제품의 지식을 지닌 소비자로 느끼고 있었으며, 자신만의 고유한 스타일을 가지고 시간과 장소, 상황은 물론 주위의 자연 환경과 어울리는 유연한 의복스타일을 강조하는 것으로 나타났다. 연구결과는 또한 한국문화의 특이성이 해외체류경험의 영향에 배경이 된다는 것을 시사하였다.