

THESIS

CONSUMER ACCULTURATION AND REACCULTURATION EXPERIENCE:  
TAIWANESE RETURNEES' NEGOTIATION OF ROLES AND IDENTITY  
THROUGH DRESS

Submitted by

Tracy Zarubin

Department of Design and Merchandising

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Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

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Master's Committee:

Advisor: Ruoh-Nan Yan

Jennifer Ogle

Lynn Kwiatkowski

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## ABSTRACT

### CONSUMER ACCULTURATION AND REACCULTURATION EXPERIENCE: TAIWANESE RETURNEES' NEGOTIATION OF ROLES AND IDENTITY THROUGH DRESS

The purpose of this interpretive study is to qualitatively analyze the process of consumer acculturation and reacculturation through consumption practices related to dress by which Chinese women from Taiwan negotiated their roles and identity in their home culture (Taiwan), host culture (United States) and upon returning to their home culture (Taiwan). This study focuses on these women's experiences as they moved across cultures, specifically looking at their perception of home and host culture, dress strategies, cultural value orientation, and how these influenced their consumer acculturation and reacculturating outcomes. Based on the findings of this study, a consumer acculturation model for returnees has been developed. This model reflects these women's experiences as they transitioned across two different cultures, highlighting factors that contributed to the outcomes of assimilation, maintenance and resistance. This study found that the reacculturation process was a much harder transition than acculturating to a host culture because participants were undergoing a major role transition from student to working professional and they had no expectations of what this life would be like making it difficult to adjust. Also, segregation was altogether not an outcome. This research provides new insights into the complex and dynamic process of consumer acculturation and reacculturation of women as they transition from home to host and back to home culture.

## DEDICATION

*First and foremost, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my husband Tyler whose constant encouragement and endless love propelled me to finishing this thesis, something that I would have never been able to do on my own. To my children, Zoe and Eli, who love me unconditionally and have given me a new purpose and new dreams that were better than the ones I had before. Thank you to my parents for always supporting and loving me no matter what and to my thesis advisor, Terry, for working with my erratic schedule and helping me finish this degree. And to myself for not giving up when I wanted to so many times, thank you for hanging in there and being an example to your children and showing them that Mommy perseveres in the face of challenges and finishes what she starts. Lastly and most importantly, thank you God for being there for me always, building my character through this process and for carrying me over the finish line.*

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## LIST OF KEYWORDS

Appearance: The overall look of a person, including physical attributes (Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992).

Acculturation: Acculturation is the “phenomena which results when groups of individuals from different cultures come into continuous first hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups” (Berry, 1980, p. 9).

Assimilation: Adopting products and services associated with host consumer culture (Penaloza, 1994, p.49).

Clothing: Denotes cover; the body enclosure part of dress (Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992).

Collectivist: The self is interdependent with others; individual goals are compatible with group goals; and well-being can be defined as fitting in and having good relationships (Traindis, 1999).

Consumer Acculturation: “The general process of movement and adaptation to the consumer cultural environment in one country by persons from another country” (Penaloza, 1994, p.33).

Cultural Value Orientation: Cultural value orientations is “a generalized and organized conception, influencing behavior, of nature, of man’s place in it, of man’s relation to man, and of the desirable and nondesirable as they may be related to man-environment and interhuman relations” (Kluckhohn, 1951, p.411).

Culture: Culture is invented. Culture is a superorganic, cohesive, bounded, timeless entity. (Strauss & Quinn, 1997).

Culture Shock: Oberg (1960) defines culture shock as "a disease precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse." (p. 177).

Dress: Outwardly detectable modification of the body and material objects (e.g., clothing, and jewelry) attached to it (Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992).

Individualist: The self is independent from others, individual goals are not connected to group goals and well-being can be defined as satisfaction with the self (Traindis, 1999).

Maintenance: Maintaining aspects of consumption patterns from home culture (Penaloza, 1994, p.49).

Reacculturation: The process of an individual attempting to readjust upon reentry to their home culture (Adler, 1981; Rogers & Ward, 1993; Rohrlich & Martin, 1991; Uehara, 1986;).

Resistance: Resisting aspects of host consumer culture (Penaloza, 1994).

Segregation: Physically and socially segregating from host mainstream culture (Penaloza, 1994).

Value: is defined as "an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence" (Rokeach, 1973, p.5).

Young Chinese Females: For the purposes of this study, women who grew up through their high school years in Taiwan, studied in the United States for their undergraduate or graduate degrees, and returned to Taiwan to work.

## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

Acculturation has been a topic of interest to scholars and researchers for some time. Theories and concepts on acculturation have explored immigrants moving to a new country and have looked at their lives in this new country, specifically looking at the resources they encountered in a new culture. Studies of acculturation can be observed on two different levels: the population level (i.e. ecological, cultural, social, and institutional) and the individual level (i.e., the behaviors and traits of persons) (Berry, 1990). Berry (1990) refers to this individual level of acculturation as “psychological acculturation” and defines it as “...the process by which individuals change, both by being influenced by contact with another culture and by being participants in the general acculturative changes under way in their own culture.” (p. 235). Today, acculturation is seen as a complex multi-dimensional negotiation process between home and host culture (Gentry, Jun, & Tansuhaj, 1995; Penaloza, 1994).

A subset of acculturation is consumer acculturation, specified as “the general process of movement and adaptation to the consumer cultural environment in one country by persons from another country” (Penaloza, 1994, p. 33). During the process, individuals develop knowledge and skills relevant to engaging in consumer behavior in the second country (Penaloza, 1989). The concept of acculturation has been applied to consumption practices and experiences of immigrant communities in Western societies, predominately in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada (Gentry, et al., 1995; Hui, Kim, & Laroche, 1992; Jamal, 1996; Penaloza, 1994; Wallendorf & Reilly, 1983).

Dress, defined as the outwardly detectable modification of the body and material objects (Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992), is a powerful reflection of identity and enables people to produce their own social reality (Michelman, 1991). Furthermore, dress consumption practices aid in the transition and exploration of new roles and identities (Schouten, 1991). In this vein, changes in dress can often reflect changes within a culture or cultural system (Eicher, Evenson, & Lutz, 2000). Clothing styles can signify cultural ambivalence (Kaiser, Nagasawa, & Hutton, 1991) and “can be used to mark and even to affect the transition from one cultural category to another that occurs in the rite of passage” (Geertz, 1973, p. 60). Despite the importance of dress, the overall look of a person including physical attributes and body modifications (Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992), few studies have examined consumption practices of clothing and beauty products in relation to acculturation (Sandikci, Ekici, & Tari, 2005). In a few cases, researchers have discussed how physical appearance changes as a result of immigration and how consumption practices are used to negotiate cultural identities (Lindridge, Hogg, & Shah, 2004; Littrell & Ogle, 2007; Sandikci, et al., 2005; Oswald, 1999; Penaloza, 1994). However, research focusing on consumer acculturation among Chinese immigrants from Taiwan is lacking. The proposed study is intended to rectify the paucity of research by exploring the dress acculturation experiences of female Taiwanese students during their time in the U. S. and upon returning to Taiwan.

### **History of Taiwan**

The history of Taiwan dates back to the the arrival of Taiwanese aborigines from Malayo-Polynesian (Roy, 2003). The island was colonized by the Dutch in the 17th century, followed by the Han Chinese immigrating across the Taiwan Strait. In 1644, Zheng, a loyalist of the Ming dynasty, defeated the Dutch and established a base of operations on the island (Roy,

2003). He was later defeated by the Qing dynasty in 1683 (Roy, 2003). In 1895, the empire of Japan took over the island following the first Sino-Japanese war (Roy, 2003). Taiwan produced rice and sugar that was exported to the empire of Japan and served as a base for Japan's colonial expansion into Southeast Asia. Taiwan was also the first overseas colony, so Japan wanted to turn the island into a model colony by making improvements in tax and fiscal reforms as well as modernizing the island's industry, economy, and culture (Roy, 2003). The main focus culturally was targeting the "Three Bad Habits", forced upon by the Qing dynasty, in Taiwan of opium, foot binding (young girls feet bond in bandages so the feed would not grow normally and remain small), and the wearing of queues hairstyle (male hairstyle where the front and sides were shaved and the rest of the hair is braided into a long braid) by instituting social campaigns and formally banning foot binding and opium (Lai, 2008). In 1945, after the end of World War II, the Republic of China, lead by Kuomintang (KMT), became the governing party of Taiwan. The KMT lead by Chiang Kai-shek lost control of China during the Chinese Civil War to the Communist party and moved to Taiwan and declared martial law (Lai, 2008). Japan renounced territorial rights to Taiwan in 1952 in the San Francisco Peace Treaty and the KMT ruled Taiwan for 40 years until the 1980s when democratic reforms began (Lai, 2008).

Since 1949, Taiwan's junior high schools have been teaching the English language because the Taiwanese government wanted its people to be able to communicate in what they thought was the global business language (Lai, 2008). When Taiwan joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001, Taiwan entered the global village and the English language became even more important as a skill to communicate with foreigners about technology and business (Cho, 2005). English language instruction became part of the regular school curriculum in 1994. With Mandarin the mother tongue of Taiwan, English is considered a foreign language

(Lai, 2008). The Ministry of Education (MOE) in Taiwan endorsed a series of policies and programs to encourage the development of Taiwanese students' English skill (Lai, 2008). Since 1997, the planning of the Reform of Education began with English education in the fifth grade of elementary school. The capital city of Taiwan, Taipei City, initiated this policy, which focused on a curriculum in speaking and listening skills in the English language (Lai, 2008).

Because English plays an important role in international business, communication, technology, education, and travel, the Taiwanese government encourages the Taiwanese people to study abroad in the U.S., and many decide to work abroad or emigrate there (Ministry of Education, 2015). According to statistics of the Ministry of Education in Taiwan, between 1950-2004, the number of Taiwanese studying abroad continuously increased, but this trend reversed in 1994 when the study-abroad population was about 37,000 (Ministry of Education, 2015). After 1994, the study-abroad population decreased about 1,000 to 3,000 per year. In 2011-2012, only 23,250 populations were studying abroad in the U.S. (Institute of International Education, 2013). Despite the assumption that an American education is better than a Taiwanese education, in part because US colleges and universities degrees support expectations of gaining English language skills and a higher quality of life, many Taiwanese people cannot afford to study abroad.

According to the Institute of International Education (2013), 51.6% of Taiwanese students studying abroad studied at the graduate level, 25.8% at the undergraduate level, and 8.0% were in language programs. The number of students studying abroad in the United States declined 6.3% from 2010-2011 to 2011-2012, because of the global financial crisis (Institute of International Education, 2013). Some Taiwanese students (who otherwise would have studied abroad) decided to complete doctoral programs in Taiwan because of the variety of schools,

lower tuition and cost of living, and a common language.

### **Significance of Taiwan**

In Taiwan, the number of overseas Chinese students who returned to Taiwan to work increased rapidly beginning in 1992. In 1992, 5,157 students returned, about 40 percent more than the previous year. Since 1992, with each subsequent year, the number of students has continually increased, with 6,272 returnees in 1995 (Jiang, 2003). Most recently, the Institute of International Education (2013) reported that 23,250 students were studying abroad from Taiwan in the U.S. Among the students who have studied abroad, 90 percent had chosen to study in the United States (Ruibe & Jinfu, 2003). Reasons for students' desire to return to Taiwan to work are associated with the dramatic growth of Taiwan's national economy, a more progressive society, rising income levels, a freer political environment, and improved teaching, research, and work environments (Jiang, 2003). These returnees work in a variety of industries from government and private business, to education and research institutes. With their overseas education, returnees have brought with them new knowledge, technology, views, and ideas (Jiang, 2003).

The study of consumer acculturation has been given significant attention by researchers who have developed models depicting the consumption experiences of immigrants and the impact migration had on their experiences (Gentry, et al., 1995; Jamal, 1996; Oswald, 1999; Penaloza, 1994). Most of these studies have examined the acculturation of ethnic minorities in cultures with individualistic value orientation, such as the United States. A prominent model of acculturation strategies are Berry's (1980) four probable outcomes: integration, separation, assimilation, and marginalization. Like Berry, Penaloza (1994) contributes an empirical model (See Figure 1) of immigrant consumer acculturation based on Berry's (1980) contribution to

acculturation, where the immigrant 's background comes in contact with the two cultures and results in four outcomes: (1) assimilation to host culture, (2) maintenance of home culture, (3) resistance to home and/or host culture, and (4) segregation from host.

In contrast, the literature has limited exploration of the consumer acculturation and reacculturation process in non-Western, collectivistic value orientated (non-individualistic) societies, such as Taiwan (Gentry, et al., 1995). In summary, this study will examine informants who have experienced two transitions and moved from Taiwan (collectivistic culture), to the U.S. (individualistic culture), and back to Taiwan (collectivistic culture).

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this interpretive study is to qualitatively analyze and describe the processes of consumer acculturation and reacculturation by which young women from Taiwan have negotiated their roles and identity through consumption practices related to dress in their home culture (Taiwan), host culture (United States) and upon returning to their home culture (Taiwan). Participants expect cultural differences when entering a new country mainly because of media exposure of the West they have seen in Taiwan. Role theory (Turner, 1962) will be used to understand the transition and changing role of the immigrant student. Turner (1962) proposes that if an individual's ingroup changes the expected definition of the individual's role, then clothing associated with the role will change. Previous research shows that when ingroup relationships change, physical and symbolic changes in clothing follow (Litrell & Evers, 1985). Self-concept theory will be used to understand the individual in relation to others but focuses more on the self instead of the role (Hill & Stamey, 1990). Cultural value orientation and acculturation and reacculturation research will be used to understand how the participant transitioned from home to host and back to home culture.

## **Research Questions**

This study will address the process of consumer acculturation and reacculturation related to dress. The study will focus on young Chinese females from Taiwan who grew up through their high school years in Taiwan, studied in the United States for their undergraduate or graduate degrees, and returned to Taiwan. Some specific questions address these women's movement across cultures.

1. How do women's perceptions of their own dress practices change and/or remain stable between cultures?
2. What factors give rise to women negotiating their roles and identity through general practices and consumption practices related to dress?
3. How are women's cultural value orientations of collectivism and/or individualism related to their consumption practices related to dress?
4. What type(s) of acculturation outcomes regarding consumption practices related to dress have these women experienced in negotiating their roles and identity in the US and once they returned to Taiwan?

## **Limitations**

The researcher conducted qualitative in-depth interviews of 15 purposively-chosen Chinese women who grew up through their high school years in Taiwan, studied in the United States for their undergraduate and/or graduate degrees, and returned to Taiwan. The in-depth interviews served as exploratory research to explore how these women's perception of dress, strategies, cultural value orientation and type of acculturation changed or remained the same as they moved across cultures. Because of the limited sample size, sampling approach, and exploratory nature of the research, the findings cannot be generalized beyond this study.

## CHAPTER II

### Literature Review

To prepare for this research, previous scholarship on the following topics was reviewed: acculturation, consumer acculturation models, cultural value orientation, individualism, collectivism, consumption practices, role theory, dress strategies and media influences. Reviewing this literature provides helpful insight into understanding meaningful theoretical frameworks, defining key terms, and identifying useful models.

#### **Acculturation**

Acculturation is defined, in this study, as the process of an individual's change as influenced by home and host culture (Graves, 1967). Contact with a new culture typically results in an immigrant acquiring new lifestyle practices and beliefs by being involved with the new environment. With this contact, the immigrant may change values, attitudes, identity, and behaviors under the influence of acculturation. However, each individual is different and his or her reaction to acculturation may differ: either rejecting, embracing, or mixing the new and the old (Berry, 1990).

The acculturation process can be broken down into 4 stages: (1) the arrival, contact or honeymoon stage with host society, (2) the rejection or conflict stage, in which feelings of contradictions between home and host culture, (3) tolerance or adjustment stage of moving toward acclimating to host culture, and (4) the integration or assimilation stage of integrating into host culture (Choe, 1984; Oberg, 1960).

Researchers have proposed a variety of acculturation outcome models. A prominent model of acculturation strategies is Berry's (1980) model that outlines four probable outcomes: integration, separation, assimilation, and marginalization. Berry's (1990) bi-directional

acculturation model can be measured in two ways: the degree of adoption of the majority culture and the degree of retention of the culture of origin. The similarity between the original and immigrant cultures determines the degree of how much change occurs.

Keefe and Padilla (1987) describe three models of acculturation: (1) single-continuum model, (2) two cultural matrix model, and (3) multidimensional model. In the single-continuum linear model, the immigrant begins at an unacculturated state, proceeds to a bicultural state, and the outcome results in an immigrant becoming fully acculturated. The two-cultural matrix model allows the immigrant to accept both home and host culture but the individual is assumed to belong to one category of each culture: unacculturated, acculturated, marginal, or bicultural. Lastly, the multidimensional model of acculturation describes selective acculturation, allowing the immigrant to adopt certain traits while maintaining others (e.g. native foods, music preferences, etc.) (Keefe & Padilla, 1987). This multi-dimensional concept incorporates cultural identity, language, and social activities (Hui et al., 1992).

### **Consumer Acculturation Models**

Consumer acculturation focuses specifically on cultural adaptation found in the marketplace (Penaloza, 1989). There have been several studies that have challenged the single-continuum linear models of acculturation, arguing that consumer acculturation is an ongoing process of cultural negotiation and does not result in one outcome (Jamal & Chapman, 2000; Oswald, 1999; Penaloza, 1994). This complex and dynamic process of constant negotiation can be summed up by the idea of “culture swapping”, when an individual borrows or buys the cultural symbols of other groups in order to form an identity (Croft, 1994). This complex process of cultural relocation affects a person’s identity and may require a reorganization of identity (Levy-Warren, 1987).

Penaloza (1994) contributes an empirical model (See Figure 1) of immigrant consumer acculturation based on Berry's (1980) contribution to acculturation, where the immigrant's background comes in contact with the two cultures and results in a set of four outcomes: (1) assimilation to host culture, (2) maintenance of home culture, (3) resistance to home and/or host culture, and (4) segregation from host. Penaloza's (1994) empirical model of consumer acculturation (Figure 1) presents the importance of individual differences as shown on the left side of the model. These individual differences in demographic variables such as age, social class, rural or urban residence, and length of stay in the United States contribute to the skill set the individual has prior to adapting to their new consumer environment. According to Penaloza (1994), older individuals and those who lived in rural areas had more difficulties in adapting than younger individuals and those who lived in urban areas. Interestingly, Penaloza (1994) found that an individual's length of stay did not necessarily determine adaptation, but language ability had a significant impact on the individual's adaptation (i.e. those who had good English skills had an advantage). Moving across the model to the right, individual differences were mediated by the host and home culture's "consumer acculturation agents" that influenced their consumer behavior. In Penaloza's (1994) study of Mexican immigrants in the United States, agents included the individual's family, friends, media, church, schools, and retail businesses.

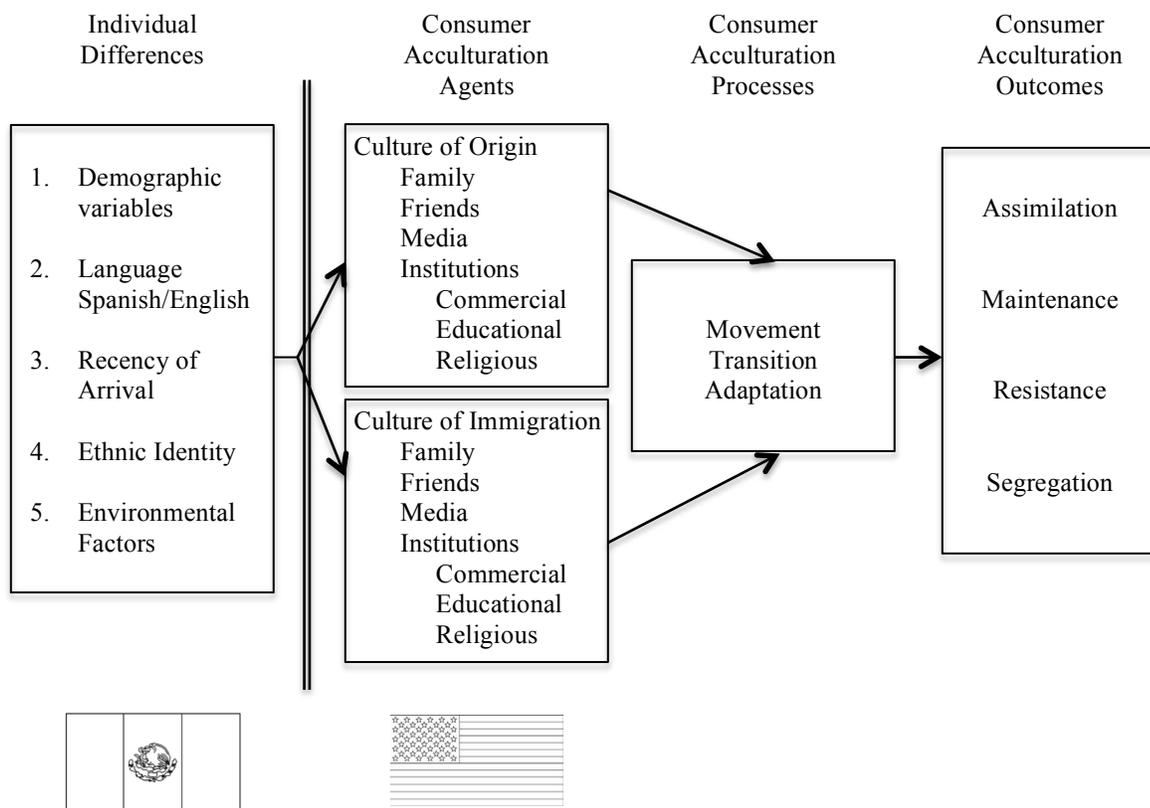


Figure 1. Penaloza's (1994) an empirical model of consumer acculturation.

Penaloza's model shows the consumer acculturation process as movement, transition, and adaptation. The process is initiated by movement from one country to another. Upon arrival individuals experience differences in their previous learned consumption skills as they transition and translate skills in exchange systems, language, currency, and social relations to bridge to the new system in the United States. Penaloza (1994) found individuals adapted many behaviors between their lives in Mexico and the United States through a trial and error learning process. Individuals established new consumption patterns in clothing, food, media, housing, financial services, and the use of the telephone. Individuals found changes in their sense of self, language, and culture, but many things did not change as their integration was primarily into the Latino

consumer subculture which was very similar to their previous consumer culture in Mexico (Penaloza, 1994).

Consumer acculturation outcomes, on the far right of the model, were assimilation, maintenance, resistance, and segregation. Consumer products immigrants initially adopted were highly visible items such as clothing. Maintenance of the Mexican culture was found through telephoning home, choice of food, use of Spanish media, and recreational activities. Because of the complexity of adapting to their new consumer environment, many individuals felt pressure from both Mexican and American cultures, which resulted in resistance to some aspects of US culture (i.e. materialism and time fixations) as well as aspects of Mexican culture (i.e., holiday traditions). Lastly, segregation was the result of physical segregation from U.S. mainstream culture because of the neighborhoods, households, and marketplace environments that reflected the Mexican culture.

Maldonado's and Tansuhaj's (1999) consumer acculturation model combines both Penaloza's (1994) and Berry's (1980) models (see Figure 2). Their model is based on Penaloza's (1994) model but emphasizes three phases of pre-immigration, transition, and outcomes, but focusing on the transition phase.

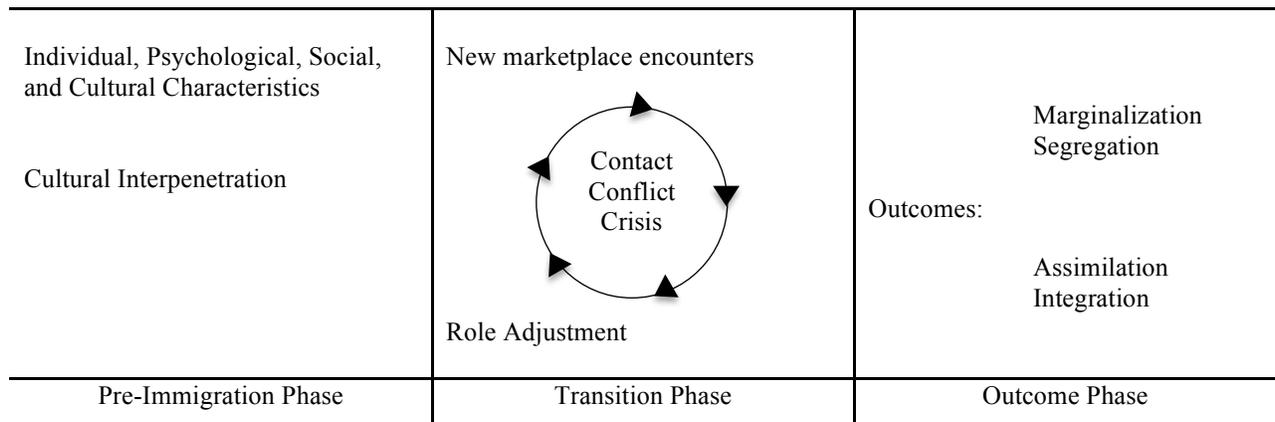


Figure 2. Maldonado and Tansuhaj's (1999) consumer acculturation model.

## **Reacculturation**

The study of reacculturation has also been significant in the acculturation research, researchers have also explored variables affecting individuals readjustment into a home culture (Christofi & Thompson, 2007; Gama & Pedersen, 1977; Martin, 1984; Rohrlich & Martin, 1991) There have been several studies on reacculturation as different from acculturation (Adler, 1981; Rogers & Ward, 1993; Rohrlich & Martin, 1991; Uehara, 1986) but also describing reacculturation as the process of an individual attempting to readjust upon reentry to their home culture. These scholars describe unexpected reentry problems, having a fixed perception of an unchanged home culture, returnee's unawareness of their own changes, family friends expecting an unchanged returnee and a lack of interest in a returnee's foreign experience (Brislin & Pederson, 1976; Sussman, 1986; Uehara, 1986). This experience is described by Oberg (1960) as "culture shock" as "a disease precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse." (p. 177). Uehara (1983) defined reverse culture shock as "temporal psychological difficulties returnees experience in the initial stage of the adjustment process at home after having lived abroad for some time" (p. 420). Early reacculturation literature focused on 'culture shock', but recent literature focuses more on cultural identity (Kim, 2010; Sussman, 2000;), this shift shows that sojourners are influenced by not only their host culture but also by their own cultural values resulting in developing entirely new identities.

Researchers have studied the variables affected returnees adjustment and readjustment to a home culture (Gama & Pedersen, 1977; Rohrlich & Martin, 1991). Rohrlich and Martin (1991) found that women were more satisfied than men upon returning to their home culture. In addition, researchers have found that individuals who adapted more successfully overseas had a harder reentry adjustment problem than those who did not adapt well overseas (Brein & David,

1971; Brislin, 1981; Hara, 1984). Martin (1984) found that people expected cultural differences and a certain amount of culture shock entering a host culture but had no such expectations upon returning which effected their experience returning. This study explores the reacculturation experience of women from Taiwan returning to their home culture and how role identity, cultural value orientation, and consumer acculturation agents influenced the individual's reacculturation process.

### **Cultural Value Orientation**

Culture is merely a name for all of the learned schemas that are shared by some people, as well as all of the diverse things from which these schemas are learned, we can see that even in their most creative and progressive actions, people are culturally motivated (Strauss & Quinn, 1997). Cultural context is needed to inform a better understanding of the process of consumer acculturation related to dress among Chinese women from Taiwan. A value is defined as “an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence” (Rokeach, 1973, p.5). People develop their values through socialization which results in the adoption of values that influence consumption. People's values affect their behaviors; furthermore, values help describe behavioral variations related to dress (Kaiser, 1990). Inglehart (1990) proposes that these values are not stagnant but can be modified through socialization.

Consumer behavior researchers have found that cultural value orientation is one basis for understanding why and how people buy (McCarty, 1996). Two important cultural dichotomies are individualism and collectivism, which help explain cultural differences between Eastern and Western countries (Traandis, 1999). While most people follow their own cultural pattern, within each culture there are individuals who are allocentric, who act like people in collectivistic

cultures, and idiocentric, who think like people in individualistic cultures. The differences in individualistic and collectivistic values have an impact on social interactions that affect consumption behaviors.

### **Individualism**

The independent self, dominant in Western cultures, is rooted in the belief that individuals are people who are concerned with their individual interests, goals, and needs, whereas collectivists are concerned with group needs (Hui, 1988). The individualist is concerned with the profit of relationships (Triandis, 1999), unlike collectivist, individualists definition of friends as non-intimate acquaintances (Triandis, Bontempo, & Villareal, 1988).

### **Collectivism**

Collectivism is at the root of Chinese culture (Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1988) and ultimately has an impact on an individual's behavior. The interdependent construal of self, commonly found in Asian cultures, is based on connectedness of human beings to each other. Collectivists give priority to the needs of others, even when the relationship is not advantageous to the individual (Triandis, 1999). Socially, people in collectivistic cultures are seen to have fewer skills in making "friends", but the collectivist defines "friendship" as a life-long relationship with many obligations (Triandis, et al., 1988). The collectivists' intimate relationships with their in-groups may prove to be a strong influence on the individuals' consumption practices and patterns.

Triandis (1995) characterizes in-groups by the similarities among members and the sense of "common fate" with other members of the in-group (nuclear family, extended family, clan, and city state). People in collectivistic societies are willing to give priority to the goals of these collectives (in-groups) over their own personal goals and emphasize their connectedness to

members of the collectives. This concern to live up to the expectations of others is referred to as the concept of “face”. Face is based on the Confucian Chinese cultural expectation that focuses on obligations, dependence, and the protection of one’s status (Ho, 1977). Chung and Pysarchick (2000) found that the 'Face saving' variable has influence on consumer attitude and purchase intention.

### **Cultural Value Orientation and Consumption Practices**

For Chinese women, the pressure to buy is based on in-group expectations. If an in-group member buys an expensive possession, then a good group member must also subscribe to the same public displays of wealth, in order to fit in (Ahuvia & Wong, 1998). Therefore when a Chinese woman “is seen in possession of luxury goods, one is not labeled a selfish materialist, but rather is seen as an example of social virtues in fulfilling familial obligation” (Ahuvia & Wong, 1998, p. 434). As such, for Chinese women, clothing and fashion are often used to indicate social worth or status, and people often make judgments concerning other’s social worth or status on the basis of what those people are wearing (Barnard, 1996).

Tse (1996) has suggested that the concept of consumer behavior is Western-based, primarily focused on individualistic goals. According to Tse (1996), Chinese consumers (1) had more homogenous consumption patterns than US consumers, (2) placed more emphasis on the opinions of their reference group in making purchases than would US consumers, and (3) are likely to use name-brand products to identify with their peers than would US consumers. As an individual moves to a different cultural environment, cultural values may be retained. Lee and Tse (1994) found that Chinese immigrants may not change some deeply rooted values and may never behave like the majority of their society.

## **Role Theory**

Turner (1962) suggests that a role does not exist without other relevant roles. For example the role of “father” does not exist without the role of “child”; this is described as the principle of role reciprocity. A change in a person's role reflects a changed perception of other roles. This results in a process of testing the role of the other to see how others respond by either reinforcing or challenging their understanding of their new role (Turner, 1962). In Littrell and Evers' (1985) study of liturgical vestments of Catholic priests, they suggest that if an individual's ingroup changes the expected definition of their role, then clothing associated with the role will change. Therefore when ingroup relationships change, symbolic changes in clothing follow (Littrell & Evers, 1985).

Symbolic self-completion theory describes individuals using material possessions to communicate their identity to others (Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1981). Wicklund & Gollwitzer (1981) suggest that when important symbols and indicators of self-definition are lacking, individuals will look for alternative symbols. Similarly, the less secure people feel in their role, the more likely they are to use stereotypical symbols to reinforce their perception of their own adequacy (Schouten, 1991). People in transition have a greater need for control in their lives because of the destabilization of their environment and their past roles. The use of clothing and cosmetics may give people in transition greater confidence in social, occupational, or intimate relationships (Metha & Belk, 1991). Many strategies have been implemented by women in transition that reflect Berry's (1980) outcome of integration and separation.

During geographic movement away from familiar people and places there is an increased burden on individual possessions in anchoring one's identity (Metha & Belk, 1991). Identity theory shows that relocating to a new physical environment affects one's social relationships and

results in destabilization of self. When individual's roles are destabilized because of immigration, they may try to resolve this self concept discrepancy by experimenting with alternating their self concept (Noble & Walker, 1997). Furthermore, acculturating consumers may try to diminish self-concept discrepancy through symbolic consumption (Maldonado & Tansuhaj, 1999). This self-concept discrepancy makes their purchases very important and can create an opportunity for the individual to alter their identity (Metha & Belk, 1991). The study of consumer acculturation through "Product Symbolism" can help understand how women use the meanings of products to define and clarify their social roles and help understand cultural ambivalence (Kaiser et al., 1991; Solomon, 1983).

Whether immigration is voluntary or involuntary may be a motivational influence on the transition and outcomes of acculturation, particularly among students who have chosen to study abroad (Wallendorf & Reilly, 1983). According to Metha and Belk (1991), a voluntary move because of a job, career, education, or marital status is a reflection of upward social mobility where a person may welcome the loss of past identity-relevant possessions. This is what Metha and Belk (1991) call "cleansing" where the individual acquires symbolic possessions of his/her new role. This "lifestyle shopping" (Shields, 1992) is used by consumers to acquire the culture for a lack of a permanent inner identity. Also referred to as "culture swapping", when people borrow or buy the cultural trappings of other groups in order to form an identity (Croft, 1994).

Shifts in roles are often accompanied by the need to employ a variety of products (Solomon, 1983). Products become more significant during role transition and can even come to represent cultural identity. As Bouchet (1990) describes, "In consumer culture, ethnicity can be bought, sold and worn like a loose garment" (p.90). People who are undergoing transitions have the task of reconstructing self-concepts by creating new roles to fill the separation from old roles.

The individual begins to form possible selves from a variety of influences such as role models, personal values, and past selves. As time goes on, these possible selves are elaborated and become a key part of identity reconstruction (Metha & Belk, 1991). The actualization of possible selves can occur through the consumption of important goods that symbolize the new self (Metha & Belk, 1991). Madonado and Tansuhaj (1999) found that immigration into a new consumer culture resulted in new roles for the consumer which may impact the individual's self-concept and ultimately his/her symbolic consumption.

### **Dress Strategies**

Integration was found to be a popular strategy for women in transition, sometimes called “code switching” where immigrants switched cultural codes constantly, adapting to the expectations of both home and host culture as the situation demanded. The most obvious example was switching from one language to another (Oswald, 1999). Littrell and Ogle (2007) found Indian immigrants coming to the United States blended old and new preferences of dress styles, such as wearing a tunic-style Indian top with jeans. These women retained a few Indian norms such as earrings, but also developed separate sensory selves in their dress for work, domestic life, and Indian events. Erving Goffman (1961) described carrying familiar possessions in unfamiliar surroundings as our “identity kits”, in which individuals help establish their identity where they otherwise would feel alienated. Furthermore, Metha and Belk (1991) found transitional objects provided a sense of cultural identity and security for Indian immigrants in the United States.

In the Sandikci et al. (2005) study of rural to urban migrants in Turkey, they found that based on the individual's involvement in dress and their self-concept perception, individuals had very diverse outcomes and adaptation strategies. Religion played an important role in the

adaptation of these women to their new urban surroundings. One woman was seen as “separating”, by rejecting a more revealing Western-style dress code, because she wore a turban. On the other hand, she was also classified as “assimilating” because she previously wore a head scarf in her rural village, but now embraced city life by wearing a turban, thus illustrating the subjectivity of acculturation outcomes.

### **Media Influences**

Although an individual's experiences are local, people do not make sense of the world through a local perspective (Meyrowitz, 1989). Meyrowitz (1989) suggests media has extended the boundaries of experience and expands our perception in what he calls “the generalized elsewhere” (Meyrowitz, 1989) in which the media has expanded the individuals' perspectives of themselves gives them another locality with which to define themselves and their roles.

Taiwanese society is saturated with Western products. However, Taiwanese women's experiences are localized by their own definitions of what is Western. These women experience a generalized elsewhere of the West and came to the United States with a set of preconceptions of what is “Western” through their media exposure in Taiwan. Their conceptions of the West may be very different from the actual experience they will have in the West.

Consequently, media consumption is important in influencing acculturation outcomes. In Lee and Tse's (1994) study of Hong Kong immigrants in Canada, the researchers found that media exposure was related to acculturation outcomes, and the degree of exposure to the host media and/or home media affected the degree of acculturation. Among these immigrants, those who lived in Canada for more than seven years were more likely to use host media as opposed to ethnic media. The length of their residence in Canada, income, number of trips back to Hong Kong, use of the English language, education level, age, and exposure to mass media were all

factors related to whether or not the Hong Kong immigrants would adopt Canadian norms (Lee & Tse, 1994). However, this contradicts Penaloza's (1994) claim that immigrants do not simply assimilate to the dominant culture over time but maintain transcultural identities to varying degrees. Lee and Tse's (1994) findings suggest that the length of residence in the host country influences the level of acculturation.

### **Justification of Study**

In summary, this review of literature includes acculturation, consumer acculturation, reacculturation, cultural value orientation, roles, identity, dress strategies, self concept theory and media influences as they may provide insight into the consumer acculturation process among Taiwanese women. Focusing on adding to the reentry into home culture literature and contributing to the reacculturation literature, the study of educated Taiwanese women reentering the professional community in Taiwan is significant because of the shift in women's rights in Taiwan. Taiwan is a paternal society where filial piety, fraternal loyalty and lineage are important societal pillars. The contemporary women's movement in Taiwan began in the 1970's and correlated with the democratic movement, this movement improved the status of women in Taiwan and began an equal partnership for women and men in social and work life (Ku, 1988). Even with the increase in women's rights in Taiwan, men still hold more material wealth and political power than women. Gama and Pedersen (1977) found that Brazilian women had more reentry problems than Brazilian men after living in the United States where Rohrllich and Martin (1991) found that women were more satisfied than men upon returning to their home culture. These differences in experiences provide an interesting backdrop to the study of Taiwanese women and their experience returning to their home culture.

This study will address the process of consumer acculturation and reacculturation related to dress and will focus on young Chinese females from Taiwan who grew up through their high school years in Taiwan, studied in the United States for their undergraduate or graduate degrees, and returned to Taiwan. Some specific questions address these women's movement across cultures.

## CHAPTER III

### Methods

This interpretive study examined the strategies by which Chinese women from Taiwan, who have studied in the United States and have subsequently returned to Taiwan, have negotiated their roles and identity through consumption practices related to dress. The negotiation of identity through consumer goods is more specifically defined as consumer acculturation. Consumer acculturation is the learning process by which the consumer selectively displays culturally defined consumption skills, behaviors, and knowledge (Penaloza, 1989). This chapter describes the sampling process, data collection procedure, and data analyses. The eight sections of this chapter include: (a) definition of sample, (b) preliminary interview, (c) instrument, (d) stimulus development, (e) procedure, (f) researcher's role, and (g) data analyses, for this study.

#### **Data Collection**

##### *Definition of Sample*

A purposeful sample of 15 Chinese women from Taipei, Taiwan, were recruited for this qualitative study. The criteria for participants were 15 women who have: (a) grown up and studied through high school in Taiwan, (b) studied at the university level in the United States, and (c) returned to Taipei, Taiwan. Recruitment of participants began at the end of April 2007, and all participants were contacted by the beginning of May 2007. Participants were recruited in a snowball fashion starting with my Thesis advisor's contacts and from family members of the author who fit this profile. Snowball sampling is analogous to a snowball increasing in size as it rolls downhill and is based on the assumption that there is a 'link' that exists between the initial

sample and others in the same target population, thus allowing for referrals to be made among acquaintances (Berg, 1988). Participants were recruited in this way where one subject recruited other subjects based on their acquaintances and those who fit the participant requirements. This sampling was used to increase the size of the participants because of the specificity of criteria. Other participants were found through the researcher's previous advisor's professional contacts in Taiwan. The researcher contacted each woman by e-mail, introduced herself, briefly explained the purpose of this research, and asked her to participate in the interview process. Additional participants were recruited from participant's contacts who fit the sample criteria.

#### *Preliminary Interview*

In order to gain insights into immigrants' experiences prior to the formal interviews, informal interviews were conducted in April 2007d over the telephone with two Taiwanese women who fit the description of the sample criteria. Since a focus group was not possible, because the researcher did not live in Taiwan, telephone interviews were used instead. The interview schedule included a number of basic open-ended questions, synthesized from the main interview schedule, with broad themes that focused on these women's dress related experience in Taiwan, the West, and returning to Taiwan (see Appendix A). Questions focused on their background, consumer acculturation experience, cultural value orientation, dress experiences, and who or what were their primary influential factors in styles they adopted. The answers to these questions were used as suggestions to help focus questions in the final instrument. These two women were not used in my final sample. The phone interviews were informal and lasted approximately half an hour.

### *Instrument*

Following the preliminary phone interviews, questions in the interview schedule were modified based on the answers given by the interviewees. For example, interviewees spoke about how their roles (such as student, employee, etc.) were the greatest influences on their dress, which helped structure the interview questions. To initiate the interview, a questionnaire was given to the participant to expediate the interview process and to collect background data about the participant (see Appendix B). Questions asked did not require description and were easily answered with one word answers. Questions related to general demographics, their childhood in Taiwan, experiences in the U.S., and experiences once they returned to Taiwan were asked. These questions filled in the gaps from the main interview schedule and allowed for more time to be spent on the participant's responses to the open-ended and dress-related questions.

Questions in the main interview schedule were derived from a variety of sources, including interview schedules from Wamwara-Mbugua (2003), Kim and Farrell-Beck (2005), Littrell and Ogle (2007) as well as the researcher's own ideas. Questions were categorized into three sections of the participants' transition, focusing on: (a) their life before the US, (b) their experience in the US, and (c) their life today in Taiwan. Each of these major sections was organized into sub-sections that addressed individual characteristics, dress role adjustment agents of influence, dress related strategies, and consumer acculturation outcomes. Individual characteristics focus on six sections: (a) family background information, (b) cultural value orientation, (c) language preferences, (d) generation/age, (e) role definition, and (f) environmental influences. Dress role adjustment agents focused on the influences of family, peers, and media on dress related issues. Dress related questions focused on the participants actual dress experience, strategies used, and actual dress worn. The participant's consumer

acculturation outcome(s) were determined by descriptive questions related to the individual's consumption experiences. Overarching, open-ended questions were asked at the end of the interview that compared all three experiences. The purpose of the series of questions was to learn what dress-related integration strategies these women used to adapt to United States culture and to re-integrate upon returning to Taiwan and how their individual characteristics may have influenced their experiences in each culture.

### *Stimulus Development*

As the main interview schedule was based on the recollection of styles worn by the participant, an imagery set was developed to jog the participants' memories of what they actually wore. Before asking the dress related questions in the departee and United States sections of the main interview schedule, the interviewer showed participants a set of 20 color photo images selected from popular magazines, 10 images from U.S. magazines and 10 images from popular Taiwanese magazines, from the appropriate decades.

To develop the stimuli the researcher examined U.S. as well as Taiwanese fashion magazines. Mainstream fashion magazines were selected that represented styles that were popular during the decades the participant went to high school in Taiwan and studied in the United States. The photos that were selected were styles that appeared most often in that decade's magazines determined by the researcher. There may be some inconsistencies between the images represented in the magazines and styles actually worn, so styles that reflect a highschool and college lifestyle were chosen. My previous thesis advisor checked the validity of the set of American styles from her own experience. This set of images were modified and reduced to 10 representative images. The Taiwanese imagery set (see Appendix D) was assembled in Taiwan. Researcher consulted with my thesis' advisor's professional contacts to check for the validity of

styles chosen. Researcher modified and reduced the image set to 10 images that accurately represented popular styles worn during the decade the participant went to high school in Taiwan.

### *Procedure*

Interviews were conducted as regulated by the Colorado State University Human Subjects Research Committee. A pre-notification letter was emailed to each participant (see Appendix E). Once the participant agreed to participate in the interview, researcher emailed potential interview dates, times and locations for the main interview to the participant as well as a confirmation letter (Appendix F) that asked the participant to identify other potential participants. An informed consent form was attached to this email for the participants' records (see Appendix G). Later, two copies (one copy for the participant's records, the other for researcher's records) of this form were presented and signed at the beginning of the interview. Two days before the scheduled meeting date for the main interview, the researcher emailed a reminder email to the participant confirming with them the date, time and location of the interview (Appendix H). The researcher audio taped each interview to ensure information was accurate, and notes were taken during the interview. Participants' names were not labeled on cassette tapes; instead, a participant number was labeled to ensure confidentiality.

For the preliminary interview, participants were emailed a pre-notification letter (Appendix I). After the participant replied with when and where the participant could be reached, a confirmation letter (Appendix J) that discussed the details of the telephone interview as well as an attached informed consent form (Appendix G) was emailed to them.

An in-depth, semi-structured approach was used for the interviews and recorded verbatim. Interviews were primarily conducted individually except for four participants who were interviewed together in sets of two because these participants worked in the same office

and insisted on being interviewed together. Interviewing participants together did influence their answers in that one participant would answer a question and the other would agree with her and would not elaborate on their own experience even when prompted. Despite this limitation, participants were still able to answer the majority of questions that produced fairly good detailed insight into their transitions and dress related experiences. All participants spoke in English for the interviews with a few speaking in Chinese at various times throughout the interview. Participants first language was not English, but Chinese, and the excerpts included in the Results and Discussion chapter reflect their English language ability.

### **Researcher's Role**

The researcher's role as the primary data collection instrument requires the need to identify personal biases from the beginning of the study. I grew up in a multi-cultural household in the United States, with a mother from Taiwan and father from the United States. From an early age, I was exposed to the Chinese culture. Three of my Taiwanese cousins moved to the United States and lived with my family to pursue a high school and college education and have subsequently returned to Taiwan to work. Their life histories have inspired my curiosity to understand the complex transition from home culture to host and back to home again. As a university student, I majored in Chinese Studies, where I studied Chinese language, history, literature, and music. It is possible that my exposure to the Chinese culture as well as my being a young female will inform a better understanding of the lives of the women who will be studied. The researcher's world view and interaction with the participants did influence the data interpretation despite striving to explore through the participant's experience (Willig, 2008).

## **Data Analyses**

Data were analyzed through the grounded theory approach and the constant comparison process (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). With this approach, meanings were discovered using the constant comparative process (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The verbatim transcripts of the interviews were first prepared and read several times to gain overall impressions. The researcher then compared concepts from all 15 transcribed interviews against one another for similarities, and then grouped together related ideas and themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Through this process of “open coding” important concepts were identified and grouped together (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). As the data analyses continued, the researcher constantly re-explored and narrowed down the initial coding scheme (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and developed a comprehensive coding guide making connections with initial research questions. The researcher initially performed “selective” coding to search for higher-order connections within the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The researcher explored the data for patterns through “open coding” and found connections in emergent themes (selective coding). This comprehensive coding guide was reapplied to the transcribed interviews. As this process continued, the researcher and her advisor created a new coding guide that addressed the researcher's research questions and combined original “open coding”. This guide was applied to the interview data and revised until a coding guide was agreed upon between the researcher and advisor. The coding guide was applied to the research data and then these “chunks” of data were “open coded” for meanings within the codes. The meaningful themes that emerged from the codes were then prepared into an outline of themes and meanings that emerged from the data. This coding guide was applied to the interviews until the researcher “saturated” all categories (Gibson & Brown, 2009; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

To account for reliability, interrater reliability addresses consistency issues that may have occurred when creating a coding guide. All 15 interviews were coded by the researcher for emergent themes and reviewed by the advisor. This selective coding was then applied to data and examined within context and see what various themes emerge (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), this helped facilitate with identifying patterns that emerged from the data. Next, a revision to the coding guide was made by the researcher and her advisor and 5 interviews were coded with the new guide. These 5 coded interviews were compared and the coding guide was revised again so that both parties could agree the coding guide would produce synonymous coded material. Reliability between my thesis advisor and myself was measured by dividing the number of agreements by the number of agreements plus disagreements (Touliatos & Compton, 1988, p.2). Revisions were made until an agreement rate of 90% was reached. Once this agreement was achieved, the 15 interviews were coded with the revised coding guide by the researcher. In addition, one audit coder checked the researcher's application of the guide to approximately one-quarter of the data. Disagreements in category assignments were negotiated. Interrater reliability with the first audit coder was 95%. The interrater reliability was calculated by dividing the total number of agreements in coding decisions by the total number of coding decisions made.

Next, the researcher performed “axial coding” where these coded “chunks” of meaningful text was examined in context and new emergent themes arose (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Throughout the coding process, the researcher and her advisor emailed back and forth about the emergent themes and negotiated meanings until a mutual understanding was achieved. These emergent themes and meanings were outlined and assigned meaning (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

## CHAPTER IV

### Results and Discussion

This interpretive study about the consumer acculturation strategies of Taiwanese women transitioning between Taiwan, the U.S. and back to Taiwan has lead the researcher to conduct an in-depth study into how these woman negotiated their roles and identity through consumption practices related to dress. Participants' environmental influences, perceptions of dress, strategies related to dress and cultural value orientations and roles have all contributed to their consumer acculturation process. These areas of importance will be explained through a thematic discussion of the qualitative data analysis results. The sections to follow will discuss the participant's profile, qualitative analysis data results, and data relevance to the literature.

#### **Profile of Participants**

A total of 15 participants completed informative questionnaires on their own, as well as in-depth interviews with the researcher. The questionnaire asked for general and demographic background information; information about their time when grew up in Taiwan, their time in the U.S., and upon returning to Taiwan. Participants were asked, in the interview, which cultural value orientation, Collectivist and/or Individualist, they identified with while growing up in Taiwan, in the U.S. and when they returned to Taiwan with the definitions provided by the researcher. Individualist are independent from others where their goals were not connected to group goals and their well-being could be defined as satisfaction with the self (Traindis, 1999). Collectivists see the self as being interdependent with others where individual goals were compatible with group goals; and the Collectivist well-being was defined as fitting in and having good relationships (Traindis, 1999). Participants were also asked about their interest in fashion

using a scale from 1 to 7, 1 not being interested in fashion and 7 being highly interested in fashion.

Table 1 shows data from the participants' time growing up in Taiwan, Table 2 presents data from their time in the United States, and Table 3 shows data from when they returned to Taiwan. The age of respondents ranged from 25-48 with the mean age of respondents being 37. Participants came from varied economic backgrounds. More than half came from middle class backgrounds, 20% of participant's came from both lower and upper middle class backgrounds and only one came from a wealthy family. The earliest year of arrival to the United States was 1990 and the last was 2004. The average time spent living in the United States was three and a half years. Despite only living in the U.S. for a few years, participants' cultural value orientation changed after they returned back to their home culture of Taiwan. Over half of the participants (53%) reported that they became more Individualistic upon returning to Taiwan. This increase was determined by looking at participant's cultural value orientation growing up in Taiwan, where 6 saw themselves as Individualist, after living in the U.S. and returning to Taiwan, 14 out of 15 saw themselves as Individualist. The researcher divided the increase of 8 by the original number of participants (15) and then multiplied this number by 100. Half of the participants chose to study on the West, and the other half studied on the Midwest and East Coasts. Also, participants who spent their time on the West and East coast found that their fashion interest increased after they returned to Taiwan, but the participants who lived in the Mid West found their fashion interest decreased upon returning to Taiwan.

Table 1. Profile of Participants when they grew up in Taiwan

Taiwan				
<i>Participant</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Family Economic Background</i>	<i>Cultural Value Orientation</i>	<i>Fashion Interest<sup>a</sup></i>
1	40	Middle Class	Individualism	5
2	42	Middle Class	Individualism	3
3	39	Middle Class	Individualism	4 or 5
4	36	Middle Class	Collectivism	5
5	39	Lower Middle Class	Individualism	2 or 3
6	32	Middle Class	Collectivism	3
7	37	Upper Middle Class	N/A <sup>b</sup>	N/A
8	39	Lower Middle Class	Collectivism	2 or 3
9	33	Middle Class	Individualism	2
10	36	Wealthy	Collectivism	2
11	25	Middle Class	Collectivism	2
12	36	Upper Middle Class	Collectivism	3 or 4
13	48	Middle Class	Collectivism	6
14	41	Lower Middle Class	Collectivism	4
15	31	Upper Middle Class	Individualism	4

<sup>a</sup> Participant's fashion interest was measured on a scale between 1 to 7. 1 being not interested in fashion and 7 being highly interested in fashion.

<sup>b</sup> Participant did not answer the question.

Table 2. Profile of Participants when they lived in the United States

United States								
<i>Participant</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Arrival Date</i>	<i>Years in the US</i>	<i>Worked in the US (Y/N)</i>	<i>Family in the US (Y/N)</i>	<i>Location in US</i>	<i>Fashion Interest<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Cultural Value Orientation</i>
1	40	1996	1.5	No	No	Boston, MA	5	Individualism
2	42	1992	2.5	No	No	Berkeley, CA	3	Individualism
3	39	1993	3	Yes	No	East Lansing, MI	5	Individualism
4	36	1994	1.5	Yes	No	East Lansing, MI	5	Individualism
5	39	1993	1.5	Yes	No	West Lafayette, IN	2	Individualism
6	32	1998	6	N/A <sup>b</sup>	N/A <sup>b</sup>	Arizona and Los Angeles, CA	4	Individualism /Collectivism
7	37	1990	7	N/A <sup>b</sup>	N/A <sup>b</sup>	Long Beach, CA	4	Individualism /Collectivism
8	39	1986	2	No	No	Hawaii	2	Individualism
9	33	2000	2.5	Yes	No	Columbia, MI	1	Individualism
10	36	1992	8	No	Yes	Riverside, CA	7	Individualism
11	25	2004	2.5	No	No	Los Angeles, CA	6	Individualism
12	36	1993	8	Yes	No	Berkeley, CA	3 or 4	Individualism
13	48	1997	3	Yes	No	Greely, CO	2	Individualism
14	41	1991	3	N/A	Yes	Nashville, TN	3	Collectivism
15	31	2002	1	N/A	Yes	Los Angeles, CA	2	Individualism

<sup>a</sup> Participant's fashion interest was measured on a scale between 1 to 7. 1 being not interested in fashion and 7 being highly interested in fashion.

<sup>b</sup> Participant did not answer the question.

Table 3. Profile of Participants upon Returning to Taiwan

Returning Taiwan					
<i>Participant</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Reason for Returning</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Cultural Value Orientation</i>	<i>Fashion Interest<sup>a</sup></i>
1	40	Finished with school	PR Consulting	Individualism	5 or 6
2	42	Finished school and return to Husband in Taiwan	Regulatory Affairs	Individualism	6
3	39	Personal Issue	Journalist	Individualism	3 or 4
4	36	Better to fulfill career in Taiwan	Education	Individualism	5
5	39	Was never planning on staying in US, Loves Taiwan	Government	Individualism	1
6	32	N/A <sup>b</sup>	Business Risk Management	Individualism	5
7	37	N/A <sup>b</sup>	Financial Institutions	Individualism	5
8	39	Returning to be with family	Investment Manager	Collectivism/Individualism	3 or 4
9	33	Because of job	Investment Manager	Individualism	3
10	36	Husband's job	Home Maker/Pastor Wife	Individualism	7
11	25	Finished school	Sales Assistant	Individualism	5
12	36	Found a job in Taiwan	Public Relations	Individualism	7
13	48	Family and job in Taiwan	Teacher	Individualism	6
14	41	Planning on returning after finishing degree	College Instructor	Individualism	3
15	31	Missed family in Taiwan and couldn't drive in US	Teacher	Individualism	5 or 6

<sup>a</sup> Participant's fashion interest was measured on a scale between 1 to 7. 1 being not interested in fashion and 7 being highly interested in fashion.

<sup>b</sup> Participant did not answer the question.

## **Qualitative Data**

Themes emerged from the data have been organized sequentially following each research question. Women's perceptions of Taiwanese, U.S. and returning Taiwanese dress was the first question that is addressed. Secondly, themes that emerged from the strategies participants used to negotiate their identity specifically looking at role identity and influencing agents, their own self-concept and environmental influences are discussed. Thirdly, participants' cultural value orientation is examined. And lastly, themes that emerged about the women's acculturation outcomes are discussed.

### **Research Question One**

#### *Perception*

Participants were asked how their perception of their own dress practices changed and/or remained stable as they moved between the cultures of Taiwan, United States and then Returning to Taiwan. The answer to this question has been broken down into three sections: Taiwan, United States and Returning Taiwan. Perception has been defined as any thoughts and/or beliefs about Taiwanese Dress. Participants perceptions of Taiwan, U.S. and returning to Taiwan dress emerged from Participant's interviews and are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Perception Themes

Perceptions	
	Themes
Taiwan Perception	School influence on dress
	The Japanese, the formal, and the ugly Influence
	Influence of in-group expectations
U.S. Perception	Land of the free, the comfortable and the sexy
	Regional distinction
Returning Taiwan Perception	Taiwanese variety with international influences
	Returning home culture shock
	Influence of Japanese culture

*Taiwan Perception.*

*School influence on dress.*

School influence on dress refers to how school uniform policies and time spent in school influenced dress in and outside of school because there was no time to explore dress on their own outside of school. Participants grew up in Taiwan and attended high schools and universities there. Dress was limited to school uniforms in Taiwanese high schools, and at some schools, students' hair length was required to be a certain length. Participants found that school dress was very restrictive. These restrictive dress policies were not only enforced by administration but by

students as well. Joseph (1986) suggested clothing can be considered a uniform suppressing individuality and creating a status distinction between faculty and students. Consistent with this literature, uniforms were seen as symbols of group membership and in the case of the majority of the participants, these uniforms influenced choices of their dress outside of school.

Yes, it is very different. I don't know if it is because of age. I don't know why. In Taiwan it is very limited, very restricted, because from all the experience in school we were. School is very restricted you can't do anything. If you, even like, cut your, or layer your hair that is called a bad girl. (Participant #10)

Because in Taiwan, especially when you are before 18-years-old, you spend a lot of time in schools, [I: Um-hum.] yes, and in your academic things, so you don't have any, you don't have that much time to pay attention to your dress. (Participant #9)

### *The Japanese, the formal, and the ugly influence.*

The Japanese, the formal, and the ugly influence is what most participants perceived Taiwanese dress to be Japanese, formal and ugly. They felt dress, uniforms and what the general Taiwanese public wore, was ugly, too formal and majorly influenced by Japanese fashion and these styles were not preferred by the participants. Yang (2006) describes Taiwanese youth culture as worshipping all things Japanese, from fashion to movies, because these women were not alive to witness the Japanese war atrocities. Japanese influence upon this young Taiwanese generation was seen through Taiwanese popular dress. Several participants found that Taiwanese clothing was closely related to Japanese style.

Taiwanese clothing is more closer to Japanese style...(Participant #1)

Participants saw Taiwanese style as more formal than American style. Participants compared Taiwanese dress to the casual t-shirt and jeans U.S. style. They felt that the Taiwanese dressed more formally and wore styles that might be considered business dress in the United States. They did not like the popular styles in Taiwan and found them to be ugly.

But eventually, compared to the Taiwanese and the Americans, their dressing style, I would say the Taiwanese dress more formally. (Participant #13)

Uh-huh, like the peers. Um, a little bit I guess. I don't know because sometimes when I look at like the pictures from the old days and um I think, "Wow, god it's like, it's ugly." But actually that was the style. (Laughs) The fashionable style at those ages. [I: Uh-huh.] So yeah. (Participant #3)

### *Influence of in-group expectations.*

In Taiwan, participants' in-groups influenced them to confirm their relationship by dressing similar to their peers. Traindis (1995) characterizes in-groups by the similarities among members and the sense of "common fate" the in-group shares (nuclear family, extended family, clan, and city state). Consistent with the literature, the majority of the participants gave priority to their in-group expectations on dress and wore what they thought would be expected of them. "Experiencing interdependence entails seeing oneself as part of an encompassing social relationship and recognizing that one's behavior is determined, contingent on, and, to a large extent organized by what the actor perceives to be the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others in the relationship" (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p. 227)." Participants felt like they were being controlled and cared too much about what others think.

In Taiwan it's more like people are trying to control you or telling you what, but in the States it's different; you can do whatever you like. (Participant #11)

I think Taiwanese people tend to care more about what other people think, and they're so conscious of that and sometimes I don't feel there is so much individual in themselves. American people you know say what they want to say and express how they want to express. (Participant #12)

To sum up, participant's actual dress was seen as restricted by school uniform that was not only enforced by school uniform policies but by in-group expectations. Participants generally had a negative perception of Taiwanese dress and felt dress in Taiwan was ugly, formal, and influenced by Japanese style.

### *U.S. Perception.*

Participants grew up in a culture that was already saturated with Western media and products. They had a 'generalized elsewhere' (Meyrowitz, 1989) perception of the West because

of Western media exposure in their home culture. This second section focuses on the participants' perceptions, any thoughts and/or beliefs, about dress in the United States.

Perceptions of U.S. dress was influenced by many "voices" (television, movies, friends experience, and magazines). Perception was also influenced by their first hand experience in the United States. Through observations and interactions within the U.S., the participants developed their own perceptions of U.S. dress.

*Land of the free, the comfortable and the sexy.*

In contrast to the participant's views of Taiwanese Style, U.S. style was seen as the land of the free, the comfortable and the sexy. Participants observed dress in the United States, specifically on U.S. College campus' as casual, comfortable, simple, free, and sexy. Dierdre Clemente discusses how college students redefined American style in the 1960's in Dress Casual (2014), and found the rise of casual, comfortable, sports style redefined dress in the United States. Consistent with Clemente's (2014) study, the majority of participants thought dress in the U.S. was very casual and that people in the U.S. wore casual dress for every occasion and even dressed like they were doing sports when they were not.

The first impression. Casual. Very casual (Participant #10)

Casual all the time. (Participant #7)

No. Not really. Because I think probably from my impression they didn't actually care about your dress at all, because of their style. Their style is very much sports like, very casual, most of the time they wear sneakers, t-shirts, so for me it was not too much style. (Participant #2)

Some participants' views about U.S. dress changed after living in the United States. Their opinions became more favorable after seeing actual dress in the U.S. The majority of the participants began to prefer the natural, casual and comfortable U.S. styles. Participants felt that US fashion was not only comfortable but showed that you had confidence. Participants had a

‘generalized elsewhere’ (Meyrowitz, 1989) view of the United States prior to coming to the U.S. but some of their views changed after living in the U.S.

My perception of Western dress before I moved to the United States, I think most of my perception come from the movie. [I: Okay.] Come from the T.V. [I: Um-hum.] Yeah. This is my perception by Western people’s dressing. (Participant #13)

Before I went to the States I think most of the American dress is pretty weird; it’s too casually, yeah. It’s totally different with Taiwan. But after I go to the States, I don’t know why but somehow it just turns to be very natural, very really casual, but the comfortable, the comfort is the most important thing but before it was like you know the outfit how it looked is the most important thing. (Participant #11)

Yeah, I think the best part is that their fashion shows they are comfortable, whatever in different occasions either at home or on the street or a special occasion, they you know whatever the choice they choose to put on it shows their personality and it shows they are confident in themselves. (Participant #14)

Most participants saw U.S. dress as favorable and preferred the styles in the U.S. as opposed to the styles in Taiwan. Many participants preferred this casual and comfortable style in comparison to the complicated and colorful Taiwanese style. Yang (2006) found that Taiwanese female consumers had positive perceptions of American apparel brands. This positive perceptions of American apparel was also found in Taiwanese consumers, they preferred and had positive perceptions of U.S. apparel brands (Wang, 1997).

I think I like the styles back in the States better. Ummm...I felt here people were dressing too colorful and the design was too complicated. Which I might not have sensed, I may not have sensed so clearly before I went to the States. I did not like those styles, because I told you that before I like to, comparatively I wore simpler things, simpler colors, simpler cutting Or cotton, that was because, probably because my personality did not like them, complicated and colorful designs seemed peculiar. So after coming back to the States, I quickly adopted the simple fashion. (Participant #2)

Yes, I think so. Ummm...I think I borrowed the preference of simple style in the States that affected me in my future dressing preference a lot. (Participant #2)

Not only did participants observe U.S. style as casual, they also found U.S. style as revealing and sexy. Although some participants not feeling comfortable wearing these revealing and sexy styles themselves, they did like the freedom to wear whatever they wanted and found that this was the best parts of U.S. dress.

Well, I think the first impression was, I think the people so, I mean the girls, they were more mature or something above their age is clothes. For example they prefer the dress with you know the very, [I: Low cut?] yeah, something like that. So, so, so basically that would not happen to Taiwanese people. [I: Um-hum.] Obviously. (Participant #6)

Two ways. I mean two different aspects. One is quite casual – T-shirts, jeans; which was quite dress in the States and also I mean to us, Americans prefer to dress I don't want to call it as sexy... (Participant #4)

Despite feeling freedom to wear what they wanted, some participants felt that wearing clothing that was 'too formal' felt uncomfortable because they felt that this was not what was normal dress in the U.S. Participants did not want to stick out or be seen as different. There was freedom only when participants wore casual clothing.

*Regional distinction.*

Participants made distinctions between East, West Coast, and Midwest dress. West Coast was seen as casual, East Coast more formal, and Midwest was seen as sloppy. The majority of the participants' perceptions of U.S. dress differentiated between East and West Coast. East Coast dress was seen as more formal whereas West Coast was seen as casual. Similarly, Eicher (2010) suggests that climate and lifestyle affect regional differences in fashion.

My initial impressions...It was Christmas time, so it was winter, I think it is cold. I don't know I mean...because my sister went to Boston with me, but she was living in Utah. So, they have very different styles. I mean in Utah and Boston, Massachusetts. For example in Boston, they don't wear snow jackets. They have da yi, how do you say MORE FORMAL...they have more formal even the students they do not wear snow jackets. But my sister wore snow jacket, because she is in Utah, and it was kind of country style. That was the information she gave me, but I didn't tell the difference between the two places. So, maybe the Eastern coast the dress is different from the middle or West coast. (Participant # 1)

However, in the United States I think most of the people dress almost the same – jeans, t-shirt, very casual, very easily. [I: Um-hum.] Yeah. I think so. But I think it's a case-by-case. If you live in the big city such as you know, Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, maybe most of the people will dress more formally. However, if you live in the country you will more dress more casually. (Participant #13)

Some participants were surprised that their perceptions of U.S. dress were different from what they actually saw in the U.S. They were surprised that East Coast dress was more formal and more fashionable than they originally thought.

So when I thought about the stereotype in the United States. So when I saw the people in Boston, Massachusetts I mean... people are more formal, more stylistic, more individual, more...yeah...(Participant #1)

Participants' perceptions of U.S. dress were that it was more casual than dress in Taiwan. Overall, participants liked the more casual, comfortable and natural dress style but they did reject the sexy and revealing aspects of U.S. dress. Environmental differences were observed and distinctions between Mid West, West Coast and East Coast dress were made. Some perceptions changed after living in the U.S. and when they did change it was typically positive. The majority of the participants had a positive perception of U.S. dress and the best part was the freedom to wear what they wanted without judgment.

*Returning Taiwanese Perception.*

Participants returned to Taiwan for a variety of reasons but mostly because they had planned to return after the completion of their graduate degrees. All participants were 'Sojourners' who voluntarily went abroad for a period of time until their degree was completed and then returned to their home culture. Upon returning to Taiwan from the United States, participants began new roles as working professionals and mothers. Jiaying (2003) found that returnees worked in a variety of industries from government to private businesses, to education and research institutes. This resulted in new dress expectations and in some cases, negotiations and preferences were influenced by their experience in the US. In other cases, women blended styles and still other cases women reintegrated into home cultural dress expectations. Social feedback from their home culture contributed to women's perception of dress and what they actually wore. Participants found their living in the U.S. was an exploratory time to find their style. Their perceptions about their home culture changed after living in the U.S., and they found they did not like the styles back in Taiwan.

Probably right now I would think. I think all those years abroad sort of is like exploration, try to find a style that fits in most; so it's kind of a long time experimentation... (Participant #12)

Not that much. Actually, probably because after 2 years I was actually in the business world. So most of the time I was dressed looking toward business style. And business style, my memory and uhhhh...from what I

learned from the States so the whole style is very westernized. I did not think of blending my culture heritage into my dress. (Participant #2)

The best part of Taiwanese fashion upon returning was the variety but participants still felt that Taiwanese style was too Japanese and some even felt "culture shock" upon returning. This feeling of "culture shock" is consistent with Christofi and Thompson (2007) study of returning study abroad students and their experience of "culture shock" upon returning to their home culture.

*Taiwanese variety with international influence.*

Taiwanese dress underwent three major transformation over the past 50 years, first Western style dress was influential during the Pacification era (1895-1919), secondly the Qing dynasty qipao's came into vogue because of Japanese rule (1919-1936), and finally, the American influence of cotton jackets and trousers came with the arrival of American aid after the second World War (Tsui, 2011). Participants enjoyed this variety of clothing available in Taiwan, which came from various countries such as Japan, Europe, and America. They found that Taiwan had more choices than they did the U.S. This variety helped to develop a personal style in some participants.

I enjoy the variety in Taipei. (Participant #5)

But actually you know when you shop in Taipei you can have Japanese brands, you know European or American, everything, so it is more convenient. You can compare like your mood, you can dress like, depends on your mood. (Participant #7)

*Returning home culture shock.*

Merriam-Webster (2015) defines "culture shock" as a sense of confusion and uncertainty sometimes with feelings of anxiety that may affect people exposed to an alien culture or environment without adequate preparation. Furnham and Bochner's (1986) describe "culture shock" as a process of learning new culture specific skills, managing stress and coping with an unfamiliar environment. Participants experienced this process of shock upon returning, they

found that Taiwanese dress was seen as “Tai Ke” meaning too Taiwanese. Similarly, Overseas Chinese Students reported feeling culture shock immediately after arriving to Taiwan, despite having a shared Chinese background, they had to deal with the differences between Taiwan and China (Hsu, Lai, & Lin, 2011). Consistent with the initial shock of the Overseas Chinese Students (Hsu et al., 2011), most participants’ initial impressions of their home culture was that it was "too Taiwanese", too embellished, too colorful, and/or too trendy. Despite being familiar with the culture, most participants felt a degree of culture shock upon returning to their home culture.

I don't know how to describe the style...It's...We have a term for the style Tai Ke. Can you read? (Writing characters down). That means very Taiwanese style. Very Taiwanese style. Tai Ke means very Taiwanese. People...sometimes it is disappointing that Taiwanese people don't dress very well, they don't know how to... (Participant #1)

I like people, I got a culture shock when I came back to Taiwan, I know people say America is like more material country, but when I came back to Taiwan it's like how much Taiwan is also like that, people don't really care about the trends, they care about like any tiny like outfit or makeup or jewelry, and yeah we are so influenced by Japanese culture a lot; we care about all the details and I'm not that kind. So and it like overwhelmed for me to feel like that. (Participant #15)

### *Influence of Japanese culture.*

Because of Japanese colonization, 1895-1945, Taiwan was introduced to many aspects of Japanese culture as well as Japanese style clothing (International Business Publication, 2012). Participants felt that Taiwanese dress was too Japanese. They did not like the Japanese influence on dress, which they described as cutsey little girl style.

I think right now Taiwan's style is more like Japanese style, yeah, so I don't really like it. (Participant #11)

Participants’ perceptions of dress in their home culture was not fixed, but was constantly constructed and reconstructed experiences. Their U.S. experience influenced their returning perception of dress. Transitions between cultures, media, in-group influences, school, work and living situations have added many realities to these women's lives. The majority of women had a negative perception of Taiwanese dress and found that it was too Taiwanese, too colorful, too

Japanese. The only positive perception of Taiwanese dress was the variety and choice available to them. Despite their dress perception being influenced by this saturated reality of self, actual dress decisions were more influenced by work expectations and expected business style upon returning to Taiwan.

## **Research Question Two**

### *Factors*

Participants were asked what were the factors that gave rise to negotiating their roles and identity in Taiwan, the United States and when they returned back to Taiwan. Specifically looking at the general practices, actions and/or behaviors, they used to negotiate their roles and identity through consumption practices related to dress. Participant's Role Identity, Self-Concept, and Consumer Acculturation Agents were three themes that emerged from the data. Each emergent theme has been divided into three sections: Taiwan, the U.S. and Returning Taiwan. The Researcher has chosen to divide the data to stay consistent with the format of research questions. Because of the amount of data and this divided structure of analysis, data might seem repetitive to the reader.

Table 5. Factors Themes

<b>Factors</b>	
1) Role Identity	
	Themes
Taiwan Ingroup	
Work Dress Practices	Career appropriateness
Student Dress Practices	Negative ingroup input
U.S. Ingroup	
Student Dress Practices	Student dress, casual dress
	Formal situation, formal dress
Returning Taiwan Ingroup	
Work Dress Practices	U.S. casual clothing effect
	Peer dress effect on actual dress
	Business environment expectations
	Accessory differentiation
	Age change, dress change

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## 2) Self-Concept

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Taiwan	Own style was different from peers' dress T-shirt and jeans, casual dress Long hair preference Societal expectations influence own style
U.S.	Gap Style: Natural, comfortable, and casual Taiwanese dress pride Easy style change: Taiwanese to Western
Returning Taiwan	Western influenced own style Makeup and hairstyle reflection of own style Life status and age change effected own style

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## 3) Consumer Acculturation Agents

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Taiwan Origin	Mother influence on appropriate dress Sister influence on actual wardrobe Fathers against sexy dress Celebrity and magazine influence Peer response influence on perception
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### 3) Consumer Acculturation Agents

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U.S. Transition	Social living environment
	Lifestyle shopping
	Language difficulty
	Shopping with friends influence
	Formal occasion, formal dress: Casual occasion, casual dress
	Case by case dressing
Returning Taiwanese Transition	Own style not like others' style
	Negative friend feedback
	More solo shopping than before
	Positive dress feedback
	Age change and work expectations effect dress
	Local shopping effect on clothing choices

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#### *Role Identity.*

Role identity was an emergent and significant theme in the data, where the participant's role in relation to others influenced consumption practices. Turner (1962) suggested that a role does not exist without other relevant roles. For example, the role of 'father' does not exist without the role of 'child' and the role of 'student' does not exist without the role of 'teacher.' This is described as the principle of role reciprocity. A change in a person's role reflects a changed perception of other roles and results in a process of testing the role of the other to see how others respond by either reinforcing or challenging their understanding of their new role (Turner, 1962).

In Littrell and Evers' (1985) study of liturgical vestments of Catholic priests, they suggested that if an individual's ingroup changes the expected definition of their role, then clothing associated with the role will change. Therefore, when ingroup relationships change, symbolic changes in clothing follow (Litrell & Evers, 1985). Identity theory shows that relocating to a new physical environment affects one's social relationships and results in destabilization of self. Data were divided into two identity groups, work dress and student dress. These two roles emerged as the dominant identity roles the participants experienced in Taiwan, U.S. and returning back to Taiwan. Due to the segmentation of roles, age and location, data may be repetitive.

*Taiwan ingroup.*

*Work dress practices.*

*Career appropriateness.*

All of the participants wanted to wear career appropriate dress to work. Participants' work dress practices consisted of what participants dressed in in a work setting in Taiwan (before leaving for the U.S.). Farber and Kwon (1992) found, in their study of college students' attitudes toward appropriate clothing, students' perceived occupational attributes also increased with perceived job status. Accordingly their perception of appropriate dress enhanced their perception of occupational attributes such as professionalism, intelligence and competence. Like these students, most participants in this study felt that dressing in career appropriate dress reflected their occupational competency. For example the more career appropriate the participant dressed, the more occupational competent the participant felt, in turn their perception of their occupational expectations determined their dress.

Because of career I need to dress appropriate. Not whatever I want to dress because of career. (Participant #10)

I just graduated from school and during the shortened working experience I got the uniform, I worked for a hotel so they have a uniform. (Participant #5)

### *Student dress practices.*

What participants dressed in a school setting in Taiwan (before leaving for the U.S.) was influenced by their school life and that they lived at home. Lachance, Beaudoin and Robitaille (2003) found that during adolescence, parents, peers and television are important sources of interactions in regards to consumption matters. Participants' dress was influenced by all of these factors and mostly that they lived at home and were in school. Schools in Taiwan required uniforms and this influenced not only their school dress, but their dress outside of school as well. Not only was dress restricted in high school, but all of the participants' hairstyle were restricted to a short length as well.

We don't know how to do hair, because usually we need, everyday need to clip because of school and we cut our hair very short. (Participant #10)

### *Negative ingroup input.*

While growing up, participant's ingroup's input was typically negative in regards to participants' dress. Ingroups consisted of peers and family, specifically sisters. Lachance et al. (2003) found that peers played a role in adolescent clothing choices. Participants were influenced by this criticism and thusly restricted their dress so they would avoid being called "a bad girl". Not only did peer criticism restrict dress, school environments did as well and created a culture of negative peer responses where anyone who did not fit into the schools rules was called out.

Okay, my peers always criticized me [I: Oh!] because in the college I dress different from most of them; [I: Okay.] I mean more like maybe three or four years older than them, I mean in terms of how I look because of my sister's influence...my sister would take me to dress in high heels or in a mini-skirt or very modern, a very fashionable, very unusual in the school, especially at my university, which was quite conservative at that time. (Participant #4)

Yes, it is very different. I'm don't know if it is because of age. I don't know why. In Taiwan it is very limited, very restricted, because from all the experience in school we were. School is very restricted you can't do anything. If you, even like, cut your, or layer your hair that is called a bad girl. (Participant #10)

*U.S. ingroup.*

*Work dress practices.*

When participants moved to the United States, their main focus was on school and most participants did not work, therefore there were no work dress practices.

*Student dress practices.*

Student dress practices consisted of what participants dressed in when they were in school in the United States. The majority of participants were pursuing Graduate degrees.

*Student dress, casual dress.*

In Dress Casual (2014), Dierdre Clemente speaks about how college students redefined American Style in the 1960s and found the rise of casual, comfortable, sports styles and how these styles redefined dress in the United States. This casual dress was observed by the participants in the U.S. Dress was described as very casual consisting of loose clothing, jeans and t-shirt. Also, participants were students and felt that they did not need to dress up. Participants found that they really liked the casual styles and transformed their dress to be more casual.

I paid too much details in terms of my dress before I went to the States. When I went to the States, I think because I was a student and I was kind of influenced by the environment, I pursue for a natural look. I don't know, I...I feel more comfortable? (Participant #1)

Um, when I first came to the United States I wear easy because I think I'm a student now, I'm not a teacher, so I wear...Jeans, yes and shirt and T-shirt, something like that; yes....Because I think I'm a student, so I don't need to dress formally like before in Taiwan...Yeah. I think so I have changed my dressing style during the U.S.A., yeah. The reason why, because my status because I'm a student, [I: Um-hum.] so I feel more easy to dress up casually [I: Um-hum.] because I'm a student. (Participant #13)

Lachance et al. (2003) spoke of brand sensitivity and the buyer's decision making process. For the participants, brands played an important role in the buying act. Gap was a store that the participants gravitated to because that represented the casual look they liked.

Most of the time I was a student, so actually I think the style I wore at that time was those that you would find at the Gap. Yes. That was not as casual as sports clothes, but still they were not formal...I think I dressed comparatively more formal because Gap is already formal in campus like Berkley. (Participant #2)

*Formal situation, formal dress.*

Participants dressed more formally to formal events, specifically for presentations and special events. For example, teachers who dressed more formally were shown more respect (Davis, Clarke, Francis, & Hughes, 1992). Being formally dressed had social consequences. This desire for respect and to fit in influenced participants to wear formal dress to formal events. Participants wore formal dress for presentations and this formal dress can be described as wearing business suits. Other formal events participants participated in were when they spent time with their Chinese peers and felt they had to dress more formally than when they spent time with their American peers.

For special meeting; yes. For formal presentation in business school they required a business suit for students. (Participant #5)

Ohhh...ummm...yeah...I think that question reminds me. When I go to Chinese church with lots of Chinese people I tend to wear more formal dress. And if the place has a lot of Americans or is an American church I would tend to wear very casual. I did not notice that. (Participant #10)

*Returning Taiwan ingroup.*

*Work dress practices.*

Participants returned to Taiwan after they finished their graduate degrees and started working. Their work dress practices were what they wore in a work setting in Taiwan. Because of this life change, there was no student dress.

*U.S. casual clothing effect.*

Participants' dress upon returning to the work place was influenced by U.S. casual clothing. This influenced their returning dress to be more casual and they were more confident in what they wore. Kumar, Kim and Pelton's (2000) study found Indian consumers preferred U.S. brands more than their local Indian brands. Like the Indian consumers, participants preferred the U.S. brands and styles more than the styles they found back in Taiwan. Most participants felt that they changed their dress depending on the situation and only dressed formally when they were in

a work situation. All other times they dressed very casually and some participants even described their styles as sloppy.

Right now I think the experience of the United States affect me a lot about my dressing style. Um, if I have a some events, some meeting I will dress more formally; however, if I don't have any events, if I don't class, if I have at home then I will dress more casually... Very causally. So I remember one of my neighbor, I live in the fourth floor, my neighbor who live in the nine floor, a gentlemen, who spoke to me, "Why you, sometimes you dress very formally but sometimes you dress so casual?" And some kinds of comments about my dressing style, because he saw me lots of times so I'm so dressed up, but sometimes I'm so casually... So I think I, the experience of the U.S.A. influence my dressing style a lot. So I will you know case-by-case. Sometimes I'm very formally, dress formally; sometimes I'm just very casual. (Participant #13)

### *Peer dress effect on actual dress.*

The participant peers' dress affected their actual dress style. Research has recognized group membership as a determinant of behavior and people act in accordance with a frame of reference (Merton & Rossi, 1949). Bearden and Etzel (1982) also found that reference groups, such as peers, influence consumer behavior including product and brand decisions. Individuals who are admired can exercise influence on attitude formation, information processing and purchase behavior (Bearden, Netemeyer, & Teel, 1989). Despite these strong influencing agents, many participants still saw themselves as different from their peers and they also did feel pressure to dress like their peers.

The first year and some kind of you know confusion. I prefer to dress casually, but I'm in Taiwan, and most of the people around me doesn't approve me to dress casually. Because they say, "Wow, you are teacher. How can you dress jeans, t-shirt and come to school? No, no way." So I'm some kind of confusion. Yeah. I need to adapt; I need to adapt the environmental demands of the um, of the Taiwanese. Yeah. (Participant #13)

There is a colleague, she's very fashionable, you know she the newest kind of clothes in the market she goes and gets it and buys it and puts it on. And you know I looked at her and I'm so different, especially after becoming a mom. I, sometimes I try to think from even perspective and I think that they will think that I am a traditional type of woman. And I think I accept that, I think its fine. (Participant #14)

Peers and family influenced the participant's attitudes, norms and values through direct interaction. Childers and Rao (1992) found that peers had a higher influence on luxury purchases and family had more of an influence on the necessities individuals purchased. Participants also

found that peers influenced their luxury purchases and they felt pressured to dress like their peers.

Yeah, yeah. Truly, yes. Um, as I mentioned, when I came back to Taiwan the first semester I dress more casual. Then, I mean I, I think I have some pressure, so I would dress formally in some occasion, in some event if I need. But right now I think I will look at the situation. As I mentioned, um, casual, dress casually is my favorite [I: Um-hum.] dressing style. So, I will change my dress, my clothes during one day. (Participant #13)

### *Business environment expectations.*

Participants' business environmental expectations affected participant's actual dress.

Ibarra (2003) suggested that people negotiate work identities using dress, and personal style to signal who they are to others. Self-narratives, stories that make a point about the narrator, help people revise and reconstruct identities during work role transitions. Most participants' self-narratives about their dress helped them construct their identity as working women where wearing business suits to look professional was important.

If I had meetings I would wear suits...After coming back...I cut my hair short to fit in the business environment. So, that was the first time I cut my hair short...My typical dress...I felt like that I was forcing myself to adapt in to business environment. Because I was not so much a business woman before, and I was interested in exploring the business world after returning to Taiwan. So, I think I have to dress business like...It depended on what job I was taking. Most of the time it was business like...Not that much. Actually, probably because after 2 years I was actually in the business world. So most of the time I was dressed looking toward business style. And business style, my memory...from what I learned from the States so the whole style is very westernized. I did not think of blending my culture heritage into my dress. (Participant #2)

Um, because just like before I just wear what I want to wear, and of course, I should say that when I come back to Taiwan and I start my job immediately, so I, yes, I spend some money to buy more business suits because I need to work immediately. But besides that, except that, yes everything just remains the same as before. (Participant #9)

Participants' self-narratives about their dress helped them construct their identity as working women who dressed formally depending on the setting. In Hunt and Miller's (1997) study of dress and appearance of sorority members, they found that these women's dress and appearance were dependent on a variety of factors and were influenced by situational expectations and the appearance expectations of the situation. For example, summer camp dress

was different from everyday campus dress. Participants experienced situational dress expectations and altered their dress according to the expectations of the situation.

Um, I think so, yes; because when I go the department stores and um, and how to say that? Um, okay, I know I need to wear very formal clothes, it is an investment company and in this, in this, in this field I should say, investment field, everyone wears very formal, yes. So, when I just come back, when I go, when I came to department stores I, yes I know I need to wear; I need to buy very formal clothes to meet the requirement, yes. So kind of, I mean, yes, I, I spend a little bit of time to get used to it. (Participant #9)

Easterling, Leslie and Jones (1992) found that dress is important in marketing services and that compliance to a dress code is a criterion for employee performance evaluation.

Similarly, participants dressed professionally for work and felt they had to.

Oh of course I mean since I started my work on the first day I always prefer to buy business suit only [I: Okay.] and I don't want to dress casually or...because first I am the P.R. person of the company, I mean I need to see people everyday, we represent the company and also in Taiwan I mean even now when you dress up people respect you; even sometimes you don't need to dress up, people dress casually, but it's fine in the culture that you dress up anywhere, any time. People are fine with that, even if you are the only one...(Participant #4)

#### *Accessory differentiation*

Participants used accessories to differentiate between special and casual occasions. Some participants described using accessories to tell the difference between an ordinary and a special occasion. Earrings, bracelets, anklets were what was described as accessories.

Jewelry is anything and usually some contemporary jewelry and then the requirement of the office setting – I have a formal meeting today I wear more formally, but like a Friday, casual Friday, we don't really have to dress up. (Participant #5)

Um, I wear makeup and some earrings and sometime the, ah necklace. (Participant #3)

Yeah, big earrings, and uh...bracelets and anklets. (Participant #1)

I would put on a necklace. That was the probably the only part that could tell the difference between ordinary and special occasions. (Participant #2)

#### *Age change, dress change.*

Because of age change, participants dress changed to become more professional.

Compton (2007) discussed about how professional dress is appropriate for the work environment

and how wearing clothes that fits one's frame and dress that is age appropriate is important.

Participants experienced dress change and new expectations that come with age change.

Um, I think actually the difference is I'm older and I just have to dress more professional; (Participant #8)

*Self-Concept.*

*Taiwan.*

Epstein (1973) reviewed self-concept literature and concluded that self-concept is a self-theory that the individual has unwittingly constructed about herself as an experiencing, functioning individual, apart of a broader theory that respects her entire range of significant experiences. Epstein (1973) summarized that self-theory is a theory that solves the problem of how the self can be both the subject and object of what is known. Mead (1934), Cooley (1902), and James (1890) theorized that self-concept is a global perception of who one is. More specifically, Cooley (1902) emphasized self-feeling, or the self, as sentiment where a person's clothing served to establish a mood for herself and eliciting validation from others. These theorists felt that one's concept of self is developed, maintained and modified through individual experiences and social interactions. Participants themselves described their self-concept as their 'own style'.

Self-concept discrepancy points to one's sense of self being intertwined in the interactions and roles that one plays in society (Hill & Stamey, 1990). Self-concept is similar to role identity in that a role does not exist without other relevant roles (Turner, 1962), but focuses more on the self than the role. Hill and Stamey (1990) defined self-concept as "an organized structure of various identities and attributes and their evaluations, which are derived from an individual's reflexive, social, and symbolic activities." (p. 317). These various identities are related closely to society and the roles the individual plays in society. Wicklund and Gollwitzer

(1981) describe symbolic self-completion theory as individuals using material possessions to communicate their identity to others.

Data have been divided into 3 sections (Taiwan, U.S. and returning Taiwan) to give context and allow themes to emerge. Because of this segmentation, data might seem repetitive.

*Own style was different from peers' dress.*

Mead's (1934) conception of "me", the self, as an object related to and differentiated from others. He elaborates that a person establishes identity for herself with two processes, apposition and opposition, a bringing together and setting apart. Participants described their own style in comparison to their peers and as different from them. This construction of their own style and their appearance management was a means to negotiate their sense of style and construct and reconstruct their identity. This symbolic-interactionist perspective to construct meanings through social interaction (Stone, 1962) was a perspective most participants saw of their 'own style'.

Participants' own style was a style that was compared to their peers and it was produced with an ideal in mind. "It is no longer a question of "being" oneself but of "producing" oneself" (Baudrillard, 1975, p.19). This production of one's own style was a negotiation between individual expression and group cohesiveness. Fine (1987) study of "idioculture" of Little League's saw the negotiation of appearance from a symbolic-interactionist perspective. Similar to the Little Leagues negotiation of appearance, through the symbolic-interactionist perspective, one participant also negotiated her desire to be unique and have her own style within her community by trying to be different from them.

No, I feel most of the time I liked to be unique. So I actually looked for my own style. But with that saying, I think we are still under the influence of peers. I think fashion reminds you that you can do it that way. It is very hard to get rid of all the influences. If you ask me I think most of the time I am looking for my own identity, but I would not dress very peculiar... I think the dress tells my style and the translation between that kind of dress, long skirt and very simple top, represents my mind of freedom. Like the unique style which is different from the general style that people were looking more at what the fashion trends was. My style at that time was very different from the ordinary style. But my style was telling the desire to be a unique person, poetic I think, that kind of romantic style. (Participant #2)

*T-shirt and jeans, casual dress.*

Participants' comfortable dress consisted of T-shirts and jeans. This casual dress was seen as comfortable and easy dress. Clemente (2014) described American college fashion as casual wear consisting of jeans, polo shirts, and sneakers. This same casual clothing is what participants wore in Taiwan before coming to the United States. Several participant's had already identified with a more Western style of dress prior to living in the United States. Kahng (1971) found that 86% of Korean female college students wore Western dress that they saw from mass media, a 'generalized elsewhere' view of Western dress through media exposure (Meyrowitz, 1989). Participants' styles reflected this generalized view of Western dress.

Shorts. Yeah...For me I just probably try to keep it simple, natural, and comfortable. (Participant #15)

T-shirt., Blue jeans...It's more like in the middle, not as fashionable; but I don't have the words to describe, but comfortable, but not too...Sloppy? (Participant #14)

*Long hair preference.*

Participants preferred long hair, when they were talking about their own style. Long hair was preferred because it was different from the hairstyle they had when they attended school. Hair length was required to be short when they were in school up to high school. Once participants reached college, they preferred a longer hair length. Participants mainly had long hair either straight or curly, which they had permed at a beauty salon.

Hairstyle, sort of like you with long hair and then pin in the back, and straight. (Participant #12)

Very simple. Long hair without too much style actually. (Participant #2)

Well, I tried all kinds of hairstyles. I used to have long hair, curly hair, and all different styles. (Participant #15)

*Societal expectations influence own style.*

Participant's concept of their own style was influenced by social expectations like being a good girl and dressing formally at a formal event. Kaiser et al. (1991) argued that the acceptance

process is produced through appearance management and in the assessment of other's response. A "group look", is a negotiation process that includes the individuals, and group, interpretation of identity. They argue that a negotiated look evolves and displays group life. Participants negotiated their own style through other's expectations and modified their dress to fit into the "group look". Wallendorf and Reilly (1983) found that immigrant consumer behavior is not the blending of culture of origin and the culture of immigration but rather a unique style.

I guess it just looked like; I looked like a good girl. (Participant #12)

Yeah. Special events, yes. Um, typically clothing I think I wear more grooming, more formality. (Participant #13)

Um-hum, if it was some formal situation such as weddings, I would dress more formally. (Participant #9)

*U.S.*

Participant's self-concept was described as their 'own style' in the U.S. as well. Their own style was what participants actually wore in the U.S. Self-concept narratives continued in the United States and their negotiation and discussions of dress was influenced by their environment. Shields (1992) uses the term "lifestyle shopping" (1992, p. 2) to describe consumers using products to create identity.

In Oswald's (1999) study of Haitian immigrants, he found these first-generation immigrants exemplifying this "lifestyle shopping" and calls it a kind of culture swapping, in which the immigrant negotiates differences between their home and host culture. They "swap cultures" by swapping goods, moving between multiple worlds rather than blending. Participants' time in the United States presented them with a new environment and new products to buy and consume. Their new casual environment lent to many participants consuming comfortable and casual styles.

*Gap Style: Natural, comfortable, and casual.*

The majority of participants described their own style as natural, comfortable, casual, “Gap” style in which they wore jeans and t-shirts. Herald (1992) described U.S. style as natural, comfortable, sporty and youthful and style that consisted of jeans. Participants went “lifestyle shopping” at the “Gap” store, because they felt the Gap embodied the casual, natural and comfortable lifestyle they liked. Participants felt that the “Gap” store and the products they sold symbolized the cultural values they liked (Douglas & Isherwood, 1996). Furthermore, Douglas and Isherwood (1996) explain how consumption is a way of life and not just a way of behaving that is added to social patterns that are fixed. Participants consumed this casual dress as a way of life and choose dress that embodied U.S casual culture.

Okay, t-shirts, white t-shirts and tan pants, khaki pants...and tend to choose the American brands like **Gap**, Limited, Express. (Participant #10)

Jeans I think and Sweaters. Sweaters are more fitted than before, and jeans are more fitted than before... Wear shirts, t-shirts, jeans, shorts, skirts. (Participant #1)

Yeah, jeans and T-shirts and sometimes kind of cute dress...Mostly jeans. (Participant #12)

*Taiwanese dress pride.*

Participants who wore Taiwanese culturally inspired dress, such as Asian prints and qipao style garments, were proud of it. Peers spoke about this type of dress as elegant and representative of the Chinese culture. In Metha and Belk’s (1991) study of Indian immigrants to the United States, they found that the immigrants used “security blankets”, transitional objects such as photographs, saris, jewelry that remind the individual of life in their home country, to gain a sense of security in a new culture. These transitional objects provided a sense of cultural identity that might have been taken for granted in their home culture. These participants felt pride in wearing Taiwanese style clothing, in the U.S., and maybe for the first time felt pride in wearing these representations of their home culture.

A friend of mine, a classmate of mine who is come from Greek, she said "Amanda has kind of Taiwanese elegance", that is her description about me. Taiwanese elegance. (Participant #1)

I think I do have some clothes that I especially liked the style that really shows Asian culture and whenever I feel like whenever if I wear those clothes I would feel like I am Asian and Chinese and I'm proud of that. (Participant #15)

### *Easy style change: Taiwanese to Western.*

Several participants found it easy to change their own style from their original Taiwanese style to a more Western style. Participants borrowed and bought the cultural trappings of the United States to form an identity. This "culture swapping" (Croft, 1994) was an ongoing relationship between consumption and ethnicity in constructing an identity. Most participants acknowledged that they had an original style, but felt the culture in the United States was easy and comfortable to add to their own style. One participant identified the store 'Ann Taylor' as a style that she swapped for her student style. Even though this style was different from her original style in Taiwan, the transition was easy, simple and comfortable to adopt.

Yes. I think so. I think so. After the stay in the States. I actually changed my style from the long skirt, Chinese style to more Western style. Yes, I would start to love styles like Ann Taylor. It's very different from the previous style I had, because the previous one was long skirts, not tight one not fitted one, but with those styles I developed in the States were actually more, most of them were fitted short dress, very simple style, very comparatively modern. It was very different between the student style and the styles you could see from the stores. So I think after coming back I think I actually adopted those styles I learned from the fashion stores and I got rid of the school styles. (Participant #2)

### *Returning Taiwan.*

All participants came back to Taiwan older and at a different stage of life with new experiences and styles. All participants returned to Taiwan and entered the work force. Participants discussed their self-concept in terms of dress and what they actually wore, upon returning from the United States. Andreasen (1984) states that for many people who are undergoing a status change, it is an opportunity to rethink and reorganize their lives.

*Western influenced own style.*

The majority of participants own style reflected the western, casual, comfortable ‘Gap’ style. Despite Andreasen’s (1984) findings that life status change shows people changing their brand preference, participants returning to Taiwan did not change their brand preference and continued to prefer the western, casual and comfortable “Gap” style they came to like in the U.S.

Yes, I think so. Ummm...I think I borrowed the preference of simple style in the States that affected me in my future dressing preference a lot...I think I still wear those comfortable clothing as I did at school, like the Gap style, but very quickly I think moved toward my fashion. (Participant #2)

Um... [I: And reflect?] Um...I would say when I came back to Taiwan in 2000, the first year I come back, um I am influenced by U.S. culture. [I: Um-hum.] So, most of my dress more casual, even I have a class, [I: When you have a class, okay.] yeah, the first year. The first semester I think so, yes. [I: Um-hum.] Yeah. (Participant #13)

*Makeup and hairstyle reflection of own style.*

Participants’ makeup and hairstyles were used as a reflection of their own style. Self-expression and the influence of popular culture assigned meaning to different hairstyles and these values change and evolve over time (Manning, 2010). For most of the participants, makeup was either part of a professional look or part of what they wore every day. It was dependent on the own style and preferences of the individual.

Yeah, and makeup every day. Nowadays it’s difficult for you to go out without makeup.

Yeah. For example, um, I think, this as an example; for example that the makeups and the in the U.S. I already said that I prefer the bronze or more natural colored things. But the, I know that in Taiwan society they prefer the Japanese um, I mean the styles so like the pink, yeah pink or [P2: More like hues.] yeah, yeah, yeah. But in the U.S. I would prefer something more natural. (Participant #6)

For myself yes because it’s more convenient for me to go to any salon to do my hairstyle. Like you like to perm, change the color, coloring is easier. But like to the States is more expensive. (Participant #7)

Yeah, I change it and make it shorter and like more professional... But I didn’t like wearing makeup, but sometimes I would use lipstick. (Participant #8)

*Life status and age change affected own style.*

Participant’s life and age change influenced their own style to adapt to these changes. Andreasen’s (1984) research on life status change shows that because of this status change,

consumption patterns change. Life status changes include changing residence, getting married or divorced, losing or changing a job, having someone enter or leave the household, etc. For these participants, their residence changed from the United States to Taiwan. There was a change in their job and for some they got married when they returned to Taiwan. Because of these life status and age changes, participants began to dress more maturely and formally.

Okay, I think age. When I answered the...one of the questions when I was more involved in dress, my answer was when I returned to Taiwan right? Because I was thinking that it is probably because I am getting mature, getting old, and getting to know what I want, what I am, who I am and so I know what I need and I know how to dress myself and make myself comfortable and confident. Maybe that is a mixture of Taiwanese or American. (Participant #1)

When I was not pregnant, I mean especially in the beginning I preferred to wear business suits that make me look formal. But after I'm pregnant and I'm...there's not much I can wear...Yeah, since I started my work, also every day I didn't want to spend a minute thinking what I should wear so I always put out a dress, I mean a suit. (Participant #4)

#### *Consumer Acculturation Agents.*

##### *Taiwan origin.*

Consumer Acculturation agents are influencing agents (family friends, media, magazines, catalogs, language, living environment, schools, church, retail businesses) that mediated participant's consumer behavior. These agents are outlined in Penaloza's (1989) study on immigrant consumer acculturation and are the individuals and institutions that serve as sources of consumer information and/or models of consumption behavior for an individual. Consumer acculturation agents that affected participants' consumer behavior in Taiwan were predominantly family members, specifically mothers, sisters and fathers. Window shopping, beauty salons, celebrities, magazines and peers influenced participants' consumer behaviors.

##### *Mother influence on appropriate dress.*

Participants' mothers had a very influential role in insuring participants were appropriately dressed. In Wilks (1986) study on adolescent decision-making, parents were rated as more important than friends as the people who were most important in their lives. Parents

were seen as most important in “future-orientated” areas and friends were more valued for “current” decisions. Lachance et al. (2003) saw mothers as the most influential socialization agent in the family because of their involvement in day-to-day decisions in family life. While participants were growing up, their mothers influenced participants to dress conservatively, neatly and cleanly and overall in an appropriate fashion. Their mothers’ influence was in large part because they would buy clothes for the participants, directly affecting what the participant wore.

I guess clean is the priority, neat and clean...my family’s economic condition was not well; and so she (my mother) tailored most of the clothes for all the sisters and me. (Participant #5)

Actually, my mom is an elementary school teacher, so she thinks that if you be an elementary music teacher would be the best job in the whole world. So she wants me to be an elementary music teacher, so she trained me, just because she already had a goal for my whole life, for my job, so she tend to train. I think Taiwanese people, Taiwanese parents tend to train up their children to be, to grow and go in the direction they want them to be. So mom already set "this is the way you should go". So she trained me with all the classes... Yeah, we...my mom asked us to dress well, very appropriate to the event. So every time when we go to an event or party or to visit people, we need to dress up very well. When we were very young my mom tend to buy us suits, not suit, dress, one-piece dress, for a little girl. (Participant #10)

Because before we go to, we went to U.S. we are in the school, we was in the school and we have no choice, we follow the rules of mothers. And in U.S., yes we have a little bit more freedom style you can buy whatever you like, but anyway we don’t have too much money, so, so, so the choice is still limited; but now we are more interested in fashions because we have the capability to buy things and to, to, to, to buy whatever we want. So actually that’s three different periods in life, but not only during the, I mean whether it’s in U.S. or in Taiwan. (Participant #6)

#### *Sister influence on actual wardrobe.*

Participants’ sisters had a large influence on participants’ actual wardrobe where they gave a lot of input on what the participant should wear. Typically, older sisters were the ones who influenced participants. Older sisters would give advice to participants about what to wear and sometimes their feedback was negative. Similar to Blackwell and Hilliker’s (1978) study of variables in the process of purchase decisions of women’s clothing, most women found that personal sources of information like a sister were significant influences.

Probably one of my older sister, um ‘cause she’s closer to me; we were like um, she’s, older than me by two years, and we lived together until she um, she got married about like six or seven years ago. And

before that we shared the same room, so [I: Okay.] probably um her style might influence me a little bit. (Participant #3)

Even now, even now. Like I have an appointment and she will call me and ask me to dress up or whatever and this, especially for the first several years when I started living in the college my sister would give me a lot of opinions regarding how I should dress and how I should look nice...And also because I mean, my sister is from a fine house and she has so many clothes and she give me most of hers to me, [I: Okay.] and new ones. (Participant #4)

### *Fathers against sexy dress.*

Participants' fathers were seen in a positive light, unlike their mothers and sisters, by the participants. Fathers were described as mostly concerned with participants not dressing sexy. Lachance et al. (2003) spoke of that during adolescence, daughters live in conflict with their mothers, not their fathers, and this impacts their social development.

Um, like my dad he didn't like black; and he wouldn't allow me to wear black during the Chinese New Year period... Yeah. He didn't like me to dress too sexy, you know; don't show too much. Just basically they don't really tell me how to do that... More or less. Actually not just my mother, but I would say my parents because my father is as good, and he also likes shopping; he has the patience really to go through every detail with you. So he's like I could take my mother – even better than my mother. Yeah, when I try things on then he would put down some comments like this color becomes you, this is not good, this skirt is too short, things like that. (Participant #11)

### *Celebrity and magazine influence.*

Celebrities and magazines influenced participants' styles. Penaloza (1989) found that mass media were a key source of consumption information. Celebrities that were influential for participants were artists, dancers, and not necessarily the celebrities from popular magazines. Some participants referenced Japanese magazines whereas others referenced *Vogue*. Other participants did not reference fashion magazines at all because they were not interested in popular culture.

Celebrities. For example I had a, how do you say, an idol, dancer, a very talented dancer we would imitate, copy their, I mean her style. (Participant #1)

I think stars and also magazines, oh especially Japanese magazines. That was very popular for Taiwanese to learn from. GREAT. (Participant #10)

Oh, Japanese magazines and I forgot what it's called, there's a Japanese magazine that's pretty popular in Taiwan. I forgot...but before I go to the States I read the Japanese magazine more. (Participant #11)

Yeah, the majority of my time was spent in a more like country area so I don't have that much chances to go window shopping and stuff like that; so probably from movie stars, T.V. characters, or magazines. (Participant #14)

*Peer response influence on perception.*

Peer responses were influential to participants' view of their own style. Their responses framed their own thoughts of their dress. Stone's (1962) seminal article on "Appearance and the Self", speaks of identity and the self as being situated and in the shape of a social object. "One's identity is established when others place him as a social object by assigning him the same words of identity that he appropriates for himself or announces." (p. 223). Participant's identity was established by the placement of others and participants' perception was shaped by the responses of their peers.

Well, I remember in my university life I started to pay a lot of attention on my appearance so I try to wear like ladylike clothes and yeah sometimes classmates they would say comments like, "Oh you look good" or "this looks nice on you" or things like that. (Participant #14)

Um... They don't respond to... No, sometimes they would say, "Wow you look like today." (Laughs) You know in Chinese culture, we are very polite. Even if I don't like your dressing, I won't say to you, but if you dress um, very nicely then I will say, "Wow, you look nice today." [I: Um-hum.] You know what I mean? (Participant #13)

Lachance et al. (2003) found that socialization is mostly influenced by peers and social pressures to conform to group expectations. Peers influenced participants to dress similar to them. Kim and Farrell-Beck (2005) found in their study of women's apparel styles in the United States and Korea in the 1970s that women in both cultures conformed to their peers. Conforming to the group norm was important for female college peer groups. Colleges in Taiwan did not restrict dress and participants wore t-shirt and jean style clothing but these t-shirt and jeans styles were seen as more formal than the t-shirt and jeans they found in the U.S. Participants in Taiwan felt that it was important to conform to group norms and dress similar to their peers.

No, because I was... Most of the university students dressed in t-shirt and jeans, but I didn't cause I kind of Artistic look because I attended an Art Institute, we had a lot of friends, school mates, teachers who were dancers or who were performing art artists. So, we kind of imitated them. And like I mean, having the look as a symbol? (Participant #1)

*U.S. transition.*

Participants moved to the United States to attain bachelor and graduate degrees. Influencing agents, for the participants, that influenced their consumer behavior changed were predominately influenced by interactions within their new environment. Most experiences were positive, but some participants experienced difficulties with language and friendships. Overall, participants found that the people in the United States were friendly and the American made the transition easy.

Um, for me I would say it's in two parts. With the college or university I would say that's right, but my experience at that time I thought, you know my husband and I went to a Baptist church, but the people at the church were you know American so my experience was that they are so unselfish. We met some couples, or some people – American people and they are so giving and loving to non-Americans. So yeah. (Participant #14)

*Social living environment.*

Participants' living situation influenced who they spent the majority of their time with in social settings. Unlike participants' influencing agents in Taiwan, family did not influence participant's consumer behavior in the United States. Some participants lived in a multicultural living situation and spent time with a more international crowd, those who lived with Taiwanese hung out with Taiwanese, etc. The household served as an important social context and agent of consumer acculturation (Penaloza, 1994).

Sometimes kind of, but you know because we stayed in the dorm so different people from different country so we still have some interaction. Actually most of my time I have to stay with my roommate and she also let me know different kinds of people and different thinking. So her behavior is more close to what you describe here. So I feel some influence from her. (Participant #8)

Participants also lived with their significant others. Their husband was the person they spent the majority of time with.

Because the people is different, so when I moved to the United States it was only me and my husband. So there is not like the other relatives or parents or friends, so we are more tend to the individualism...Because my husband was growing up there. So, he got very good English, so he has a very good influence on me in English. When he talked to people or talk on the phone I learned a lot from what he is speaking. (Participant #10)

Just like you, you've got a person to share your life with you, so when you get home you have somebody to talk to, which is good and bad, because usually the life of a graduate student is already fully loaded; you spend a lot of time reading and writing so even if you talk to your roommates it wouldn't be much, but it's kind of interesting to know, especially because they have a lifestyle that's quite different from mine so it's just interesting to share an experience with different opinions. (Participant #12)

In Penaloza's (1995) study of Mexican immigrants in the United States, the household brought together individuals of various characteristics and provided social support as well as some tensions. Like the Mexican immigrants, participants found support in their household, living situation, and also experienced some conflicts with their friends.

I feel that being together with them works well in terms of sharing the experience of how to adapt to the new environment. They didn't have that much difficulty in language so they could not help me in that aspect. But on the other side they seemed to mingle with their classmates better than I did, because my program is, was an interdepartmental program so there was no real department there. It is very hard for you to have friends around because they were everywhere, they were nowhere. I could only see people when we were in class, but they belonged to different departments. It was very hard to develop long term relationships. For me probably I could see a different story from their view and feel kind of settled through their help and support. (Participant #2)

Um, there are two parts. The first part was with my Taiwanese friends, it felt like I rejected them; I chose not to stay with them so they kind of said to me, "Okay since you choose to leave the group we are not going to let you come back." So it kind of, we're not going to ask you to go out anywhere. And I'm like, "Well this is my vision and it has nothing to do with you." But they could not take it; they couldn't take it. So anyway, so with international students I found it really fun because I got to roommates, first one is Japanese the second one is...it's easier for me to find encouragement and comfort from those two friends, roommates, because they were in the United States for a longer time and they know what I'm saying. With my Taiwanese friends, they kind of stayed together and they didn't really – they were in a comfort zone I would say, stay in a group and didn't really get enough chances to go out and explore. (Participant #15)

### *Lifestyle shopping.*

The idea of "lifestyle shopping" refers to consumers cruising the malls and acquiring outward signs of culture (Shields, 1992). Participants did exactly this and bought brands that represented the U.S. casual style culture. Like the Haitian example of "lifestyle shopping", participants also essentially swapped cultures by swapping goods and blending them to create an individual identity (Oswald, 1999). Participants were influenced to change their dress by shopping at the mall and specifically were influenced by stores such as the Gap, Ann Taylor and Target. Local shopping was the only option for participants when they studied in the United States. Local shopping is important because participants lived in the U.S. before Internet

shopping and the only dress available was what they brought over from Taiwan and what was available at the local stores or through catalog orders. Like the women in Kim and Farrell-Beck's (2005) research, women shopped locally. Participants did the same and shopped locally in their new environments.

Yeah. I think go to the store to see what they...go to the shopping mall to see what everybody is wearing and see what clothes they are selling. (Participant #10)

Um, I remember the first day I went there I went to outlet mall; I bought so many things and I just changed my the way I dress right after I got there. (Participant #11)

More like U.S. styles, yeah. And I find I really read those fashion magazines. I guess I don't have a sense of fashion by looking in shop windows...No, not quite. I mean I just, how I had one more option to dress like them, but I just I still choose what I like, it's only I started to look at shops, in clothing shops that I normally wouldn't be interested in. Yeah. I also know people probably also noticed I dress differently from them, but I guess most of my friends and I we felt quite comfortable about it. (Participant #12)

I think I, yeah you tried to look at what people wear and then go to, because you would start buying clothes from the local shop and so you would try to kind of try to conform to the culture. (Participant #14)

### *Language difficulty.*

The majority of participants experienced some degree of language difficulty during their time in the U.S. Participants learned English in school, starting as early as elementary school, where the focus was on writing and reading not on spoken language. All participants felt that they had an accent and some experienced difficulty and stress in the classroom because of language barriers they encountered. Penaloza (1989) found that language barriers, limited experiences in a new country, because they were not able to communicate fully with people in their host culture.

Yeah, sure. [I: Okay.] Sure, um, I think that is because of language, the different language, the different culture, [I: Um-hum.] um yeah, I experienced a lot of school pressures [I: Um-hum.] in the first year. [I: Um-hum.] Yeah. (Participant #13)

Yes. Certainly. I think just like how I would react to a foreigner when I could not understand what they were talking about. You can see the body language, they will like frown, and became confused, you can see that from their look...Not financially because we planned that before I went there. So, financial was not that much an issue unless I wanted to stay longer which I decided not after I earning my Masters degree. In terms of school, yes, there was a lot of pressure, especially in the beginning. I felt the language barrier, almost...I would not say I would consider giving up my school, but it was a lot of stress in the beginning because of all the difficulties listening comprehension, preparing all the assigned reading and finish writing within the due dates. (Participant #2)

The language was a big problem, because the accent. I think the first few months was just totally...it's really hard that part. (Participant #14)

Because of this language experience, immigrants may develop networks of family, friends and other immigrants who can provide support (Penaloza, 1989). Similarly, participants felt most comfortable speaking their mother tongue and would prefer to hang out with friends from Taiwan.

Well of course Chinese (laughs) because my mother told me so. [I: Uh-huh.] Yeah, like when I speak in Chinese I don't need to think a lot, yeah. (Participant #3)

When I was with my classmates, my Taiwanese classmates I spoke Mandarin, yeah. (Participant #15)

Depends...Depends...yes. If you are with Americans you have to speak English, you have no choice. With those Taiwanese friends, yes, I think it is very common that we only speak Taiwanese. It seemed awkward, I don't know why, between Taiwanese friends if we used English, it seemed very awkward. Even though I deliberately wanted to practice English at home, sometimes with my husband, he would feel very awkward and refuse to do that. (Participant #2)

Language is a key factor in communication and in the processing of consumption information (O'Guinn & Meyer, 1983). Participants who felt comfortable with the English language had an overall better experience in the United States because of this ability to communicate and consume the culture. Having a positive language experience lead to an overall positive experience for participants in the United States.

#### *Shopping with friends influence.*

Participants that shopped with friends found their dress was influenced by their friends responses. Some participants shopped by themselves but others who shopped with friends sought out the feedback of friends. This parallels the findings in Kim and Farrell-Beck's (2005) study of Korean and American women where they found that Korean women needed a friend's opinion to select the clothes that would be just right for them.

I think I checked with my friends that used to study in the States and work in the States. She advised me not to buy any clothes because when you get there you will find the environment is totally different and you will have different ideas of dressing. I think I took her point. I only brought a few comfortable clothes, sweaters, pants. (Participant #2)

*Formal occasion, formal dress; Casual occasion, casual dress.*

More formal situations called for more formal dress and casual situations called for casual dress. Situational dress expectations were a theme for all participants. They would dress according to the occasion. Situational context involves interactions with different individuals and that dress and appearance norms are relative to the meaning structures associated with those particular interactions (Hunt & Miller, 1997).

Umm. Well probably not that much different though, but I mean well if you, like if it was a like you go out like a dining out with your boyfriend, stuff like that, you probably may dress a little bit more like, um say that just deliberate, you would spend much more time for your dress. If you just go like shopping at a supermarket with your friends then it's just probably [I: Different.] quite casual, yeah. (Participant #3)

Ohhh...ummm...yeah...I think that question reminds me. When I go to Chinese church with lots of Chinese people I tend to wear more formal dress. And if the place has a lot of Americans or is an American church I would tend to wear very casual. I did not notice that. (Participant #10)

When I first got there I would find something more formal, but after two-and-a-half years I found out I have so many clothes and like so many casual dresses. Yeah, that was two sides like one side was like casual and the other now would be like I have so many dresses and like formal things, but there's nothing in the middle. (Participant #11)

Participant 2 felt she did not fit into U.S. culture and felt like she stuck out because of a bright color she wore on one occasion. This participant learned what was acceptable, by learning what was not acceptable to wear in her host culture. She learned through the interactions with people from the host culture that "we don't do things that way here." (Penaloza, 1989).

Not particularly. Only on very few occasions. I still brought with me some formal dress which was less casual, but I found it was very difficult to fit them into the new environment. Yeah, like the color I remember I brought with me a coat, it's orange, orange color, and when I wore that I feel it was very, very strange. Too stylish to wear that walking on the street so it wore it only once. (laughing). I think the location probably differs, because the Bay area California, is probably more relaxing and more casual than other big cities in the States. (Participant #2)

*Case by case dressing.*

Participants changed their clothing depending on the situation. For a formal event she would dress formally, and for casual events she would dress casually. Living in the United States, where there is a large distinction between formal and casual, affected most participants dressing habits in that they would dress differently for casual and formal events depending on the

situation. Wallendorf and Reilly (1983) suggest that consumer behavior is not simply a blending of host and home culture but a unique style and a process of acquiring one culture by another culture. Participants' unique blending of host and home culture created a unique blending of both formal and casual consumption behavior dependent on the situation and how the individual wanted to dress for the occasion. Oswald (1999) found that integration was a popular strategy for women in transition, and called this "code switching" where immigrants switched cultural codes constantly, adapting to the expectations of both home and host culture as the situation demanded. Participants switched codes easily and dependent on the situation.

Hum, yeah, I... Right now I think the experience of the United States affect me a lot about my dressing style. Um, if I have a some events, some meeting I will dress more formally; however, if I don't have any events, if I don't class, if I have at home then I will dress more casually. [I: More casually.] Very casually. So I remember one of my neighbor, I live in the fourth floor, my neighbor who live in the nine floor, a gentlemen, who spoke to me, "Why you, sometimes you dress very formally but sometimes you dress so casual?" And some kinds of comments about my dressing style, because he saw me lots of times so I'm so dressed up, but sometimes I'm so casually. [I: Um-hum.] (Laughs) So I think I, the experience of the U.S.A. influence my dressing style a lot. [I: Okay.] So I will you know case-by-case, [I: Uh-huh.] event-by-event. Sometimes I'm very formally, dress formally; sometimes I'm just very casual. (Participant #13)

#### *Returning Taiwanese transition.*

Participants returned to Taiwan after they finished their degrees and returned to work in Taiwan. Consumer acculturation agents that affected participants consumer behavior upon transitioning back to Taiwan were peer responses both negative and positive, family responses, work expectations and shopping changes; these agents influenced participants' consumption practices.

#### *Own style not like others' style.*

Participants' own style was described as style that is not like everybody else's style. Participants found their own style was not like the popular Japanese styles found in Taiwan. Participants' 'own style' narrative was continually influenced by her environment. This identity talk about personal dress was constantly constructed and maintained (Hunt & Miller, 1997).

I guess the biggest change is probably turning away from the Japanese style, the kind of cutesy little girl like style, which you probably still see a lot of here. I guess that's one thing that after I came back it's something I don't like to see because it has a feeling that you dress almost like everybody else dresses like that and there's just no individual style. (Participant #12)

I felt like I pretty much kept the same style, but I am different from the fashion. Yeah, because I'm not really a fashion person; yeah I don't just buy the clothes because I saw them on a movie star or somebody wear that so I have to get one, have to have one, pretty much get the same; but I feel like I am so different from them. (Participant #15)

### *Negative friend feedback.*

The majority of participants experienced negative feedback from friends regarding how casual they dressed. Negative peer reinforcement may be a means in identifying consumption meanings and values for the consumer. Participants learn what is acceptable and not acceptable and messages such as “we don't do things that way here” are heard (Penaloza, 1989).

Participants heard exactly that they do not dress casually in Taiwan, but despite this negative feedback, participants continued to dress casually.

I remember that I got a skirt with the flower prints, and it's quite, how do you say that? It looks like transparent [I: Oh, okay.] from like from, from, from the ah thigh or from here. And it was okay that I had it, had that in the States, but when I came back and sometime I wore that one to work and 'cause it's um, well it just went under the sunshine and it's like, so I might receive some feedback from friends or even people I don't know. And they were saying like, “Oh lady did you know that your skirt is like kind of too transparent?” [I: Uh-huh.] And someone even recommend me to change my clothes. [I: Oh wow.] 'Cause yeah they, just for the, as they, they, they were with good intentions, but in that way they embarrass me. Because at first I didn't mind that, but since people always mind it, so, so it made me embarrassed a little bit... (Participant #3)

When I first come back? I was wearing baggy pants, baggy jeans, yeah. Yeah people look at me pretty weird, I don't know why...How do they respond?...like not like before I go to States they will say something like, “Oh you don't wear this and that” but right now they just say, “That looks nice.” (Participant #11)

Yes. Yes sure. The first year and some kind of you know confusion. I prefer to dress casually, [I: Um-hum.] but I'm in Taiwan, and most of the people around me doesn't approve me to dress casually. Because they say, “Wow, you are teacher. How can you dress jeans, t-shirt and come to school? No, no way.” [I: Um-hum.] So I'm some kind of confusion. Yeah. I need to adapt; I need to adapt the environmental demands of the um, of the Taiwanese. Yeah. (Participant #13)

### *More solo shopping than before.*

Participants shopped more by themselves upon returning to Taiwan than before. Kim and Farreell-Beck's (2005) study of apparel styles worn by young women in the U.S. and Korea

found that American women shopped more by themselves because they knew what they liked and wanted to be more efficient. Participants felt the same way and knew what they liked and wanted to make decisions on their own.

For myself, yes for most of the time. Sometimes with my husband, but most of the time it's by myself. (Participant #5)

Usually by myself, sometimes with friends. But I guess I make the decision mostly by myself. (Participant #12)

Yeah, yeah. It's the same thing; I buy clothes by myself. (Participant #13)

I like to go shopping with my friends, but buying clothes I pretty much make decisions on my own. (Participant #2)

### *Positive dress feedback.*

Participants received positive feedback from peers and family. Several participants' husbands were very positive in their feedback about their dress. Peers responded positively to their style as well. Symbolic-interactionist Gregory Stone (1962) described appearance as a phase of social transaction, in which identities of people interacting are established and the stage is set for further communications. Participants' family gave positive feedback and in turn gave participant input on their appearance and dress helping establish a positive review. Stone (1962) identifies two concepts in the appearance process: programs and reviews. Programs are the responses made about the wearer by the wearer. Reviews are the responses made about the wearer by others. Participants received positive reviews from family and peers.

My husband is the best audience, most of the time he responded very positively and very enthusiastically. For my parents they only tell me to save as much money as I could. Laughing. (Participant #2)

My friends they do, my family, "Oh yeah you've changed" but Chinese they don't really good at saying people, they just you know, "Well, whatever." Most of my friends they do praise about me and most of my changes. (Participant #15)

### *Age change and work expectations effect dress.*

Participants returned to Taiwan older and at a different stage in life than when they left. Most participants were entering the work force and embarking on a new stage in life. With this

new stage, the importance of body shape, appearance, and obsession with weight decreased (Tiggemann, 2004) as these participants grew up and matured. These women were making more money and had the means to buy the clothes they wanted. Participants' styles were very varied because of their means and style preferences and work expectations. These women's social institutions were undergoing a re-organization and their roles were unclear when they first moved back to Taiwan. Warren (1949) proposed that when social institutions are undergoing reorganization, roles are unclear and when these roles are unclear, there is an increase in diversity of clothing styles (Littrell & Evers, 1985). Participants' styles were very diverse and reflected their age change, work expectations and special event expectation dress.

Probably, but they probably would not tell the difference in style, they would only think I grew up and more mature, more money to spend and became more like shopping...Yes. Now. It is very obviously to tell because if you have more money you will have more interest investment, from when you were a poor student just hardly survive from your work. It is very hard to think about fashion. (Participant #2)

I think job working experience is the reason why I change my clothes very differently because as a student in the college I mean because my sister influenced me I dressed up in the college in Taiwan and in the states of course the environment, weather, everything so I mean very casual wear; and when I was starting my first work, especially as a P.R. person I wanted to dress and I wanted people to respect me and feel I'm smart. (Participant #4)

#### *Local shopping effect on clothing choices.*

Shopping locally affected participants' clothing choices. Like the women in Kim and Farrell-Beck's (2005) study, participants did the same and shopped locally where they found a lot of variety of clothing styles available like Japanese, European and more styles than those available in the United States.

Yeah, I found because I tend to buy the clothing in Taiwan, that they sell a lot of different styles than those in the United States. (Participant #10)

But actually you know when you shop in Taipei you can have Japanese brands, you know European or American, everything, so it is more convenient. You can compare like your mood, you can dress like, depends on your mood. (Participant #7)

Participant's dress strategies differed in Taiwan, the U.S. and when they returned to Taiwan. Participant's role identity affected participants' dress. In Taiwan and the United States,

participants dressed as students but this identity changed when they returned to Taiwan and began working, in which their new role of working women changed their actual dress. Participant's self-concept was constantly constructed and reconstructed through social interaction (Stone, 1962) and was described as their "own style" by participants. Consumer acculturation agents that influenced consumption practices of participants were predominately family, peers and shopping environments. Participants' time in the United States brought with it a new environment and displaced family influence. Finally, environmental dress practices affected participants' dress because of regional style differences, thusly affecting participants conforming to group expectations because of social pressures (Lachance, et al., 2003). Overall, participants used many strategies to negotiate their roles and identity through their consumption of dress and their social interactions with their environments and stage in life.

### **Research Question Three**

#### *Cultural Value Orientation*

Participants were asked how their cultural value orientations, of collectivism and/or individualism, related to their consumption practices related to dress. Understanding cultural context is important to better comprehend the process of consumer acculturation related to dress among participants. Kroeber and Kluckhorn (1985) described culture as a learned, shared, passed on from generation to generation, reinforced value system rooted in learned ideas, behaviors and products which are related to human needs (Naylor, 1996). Culture can be seen as a dynamic force resulting from human interactions with their environment and both influencing the other (Manrai & Manrai, 1996).

Cultural value orientation influences behavior and a (wo)man's place in nature and his/her relationship with others. McCarty (1996) recognized that understanding differences in

cultural value orientations can be a starting point to understand how and why people buy and consume goods. Thus, consumers evaluate products based on what they perceive as important and valuable and cultural value orientation is a powerful force to shape consumers' motivations (Tse, Belk, & Zhou, 1989).

To stay consistent with the format of the other research questions, each emergent theme has been divided into three sections: Taiwan, the U.S. and Returning Taiwan. Within each section, themes of collectivistic value orientation, collectivistic consumption practices, individualistic value orientation and Individualistic consumption practices emerged and from those themes subthemes emerged as well.

Table 6. Cultural Value Orientation Themes

Cultural Value Orientation	
	Themes
Taiwan	
Collectivistic value orientation	Submissive collectivistic value orientation
Collectivistic consumption practices	Ingroup buying pressure
Individualistic value orientation	Participant's personality influenced value orientation
U.S.	
Collectivistic consumption practices	Conforming to popular dress
Individualistic Consumption Practices	Participants own style affected purchases Carefree dress
Returning Taiwan	
Individualistic Value Orientation	U.S. changed participants value orientation

*Taiwan.*

*Collectivistic Value Orientation.*

Relationships with others are very important in a Collectivist value orientation (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961). All participants grew up in Taiwan, a deeply rooted

Collectivist value orientated culture (Trandis, et al., 1988), which regarded individuals as interdependent with others, and individuals goals being compatible with group goals (Trandis, 1999).

*Submissive collectivistic value orientation.*

Participants' cultural value orientations leaned toward a more collectivistic value orientation when participants were living in Taiwan before going to the United States. Participants submitted to others as well as the Taiwanese education culture, both of were influenced by participants' value orientation. Trandis (1999) found that individuals in collectivistic cultures tend to subordinate their own needs to the needs of family, group and their social behaviors are regulated by norms, duties, obligations and accounting the needs of others. Participants described submitting to their family and to their education system and did not question the authorities in their lives and as a consequence submissively obeyed whatever these authorities decided.

Ummm...thinking...I think our education, the school, teachers, they all teach us that we have to obey or submit to the school, whatever the school decide or whatever the country decides, the country decision. But from my experience, we were more submit to our parents, because we were young, so we did not get involved with the society or the country things...Actually, my mom is an elementary school teacher, so she thinks that if you be an elementary music teacher would be the best job in the whole world. So she wants me to be an elementary music teacher, so she trained me, just because she already had a goal for my whole life, for my job, so she tend to train. I think Taiwanese people, Taiwanese parents tend to train up their children to be, to grow and go in the direction they want them to be. So mom already set "this is the way you should go". So she trained me with all the classes. ((Participant #10)

*Collectivistic Consumption Practices.*

Collectivistic consumption practices are characterized when an individual buys products to fit into a certain lifestyle where consumption is used to indicate social worth and status (Ahuvia & Wong, 1998). Saving 'face' is a Confucian cultural expectation that focuses on obligation, dependence, and the protection of one's status (Ho, 1977). Saving 'face' also influences purchase behavior (Chung & Pysarchick, 2000).

### *Ingroup buying pressure.*

Familial influence, peer pressure and invisible cultural influences contributed to the participant buying certain dress to fit in. This ingroup buying pressure was felt because of the participants' collectivistic value orientation where they put the needs of family, peers and cultural influences above their own (Trandis, 1995). According to Tse (1996), Chinese consumers tend to have more homogenous consumption practices than U.S. consumers. Because Chinese consumers place more emphasis on the opinions of their reference group in making purchases than U.S. consumers and would more likely use name-brand products to identify with their peers than U.S. consumers (Tse, 1996). Participants' reference groups consisted of their families specifically mothers and sisters, as well as peers that influenced participants to buy certain products to fit in (Ahuvia & Wong, 1998).

Yeah, we...my mom asked us to dress well, very appropriate to the event. So every time when we go to an event or party or to visit people, we need to dress up very well. When we were very young my mom tend to buy us suits, not suit, dress, one-piece dress, for a little girl. (Participant #10)

Um, well for rme I have a lot of friends and I guess they are how they dress themselves influenced me; because I am similar to, my personality I can relate to them better than some of my Taiwanese friends. I'm more outgoing and independent; and so when I look at how they dress in a T-shirt and jeans or shorts and sandals I'm pretty much influenced by that. (Participant #9)

### *Individualist Value Orientation*

Individualist value orientation can be described as when an individual is independent from others, when her goals are not connected to group goals and her well-being can be defined as a satisfaction with the self. Individualism where the self is independent is dominant in Western cultures and rooted in the belief that individuals are separate, not connected (Trandis, 1999). Hui (1998) described individualists as people who are concerned with their individual interests, goals, and needs.

*Participant's personality influenced value orientation.*

Participants' own goals, independent nature, and sense of freedom influenced their own value orientation. Individualists are defined by their disregard of ingroup needs and the fulfillment of their own personal needs and gains. Trandis et al. (2002) describes individualists as taking opportunities for personal enrichment and not supporting goals for their ingroup. Participants whose personality was more individualistic, those who valued their own goals and freedom, affected their value orientation. Participants who valued their own goals described themselves as "trouble makers" and "losers" and reflected how much of an outcast they were to Taiwanese society. Participants felt intrinsically that they were different and more individualistic than their peers and family and knew while they were growing up their value orientation was different than the collectivistic Taiwanese culture. On the other hand, some participants were simply given freedom to choose their value orientation and because of this freedom they chose a more individualist value orientation.

No. I was a trouble maker and a loser and failure because I want to do something that is different from what my parents asked me to do. It was different from what society or teachers asked me to do. (Participant #15)

I, well I think before high school my main focus was study and well even though that's you know I didn't know why do I need to study so hard; I mean people told me I needed to study so that I can get a good teacher, but at that time, I don't know, study was my world at that time and also if you don't study, you know in Taiwan society the value is not so diverse...so if you are different as others they see you as failure or you know stuff like that; and so I don't know, maybe it is the same for you know my own fame also, so chose to conform to that kind of thinking, but well this kind of situation started to change everything, I mean high school and I started to think about who am I and what road was I doing and so these kind of questions and so the individual thinking – individualism thinking – I think started growing in my mind. (Participant #14)

*U.S.*

*Collectivistic Consumption Practices*

*Conforming to popular dress.*

Participants conformed to popular dress in the United States because of their collectivistic cultural value orientation. They would buy clothes to conform to the culture. Croft (1994) found

that consumers “culture swapped”, where they would buy the cultural goods of other groups, in order to form an identity. According to Venkatesh (1996), consumption also constructs the self and goods contribute to the social formation of consumer and culture. Participants wore dress that were the popular styles in the U.S. and used dress to conform to popular consumer culture because they felt they 'had' to, which is in contrast to Western cultures where goods are consumed because they 'want' to (Ahuvia & Wong, 1998).

*Individualist Consumption Practices.*

Individualist consumption practices describe when an individual buys products independent from others and for their own individual interests, goals, and needs (Trandis, 1999). Tse (1996) argues that consumer behavior is strongly Western-based and is focused on individualistic goals and consumers fulfill their own needs. Most participants demonstrated individualist consumption practices as a reflection of their changed cultural value orientation from collectivist to individualist (Maldonado & Tansuhaj, 1999).

*Participants own style affected purchases.*

Participants’ own style, confidence and sense of freedom influenced their purchasing behavior. Participants described their own style as different from those of their peers. Mead (1934), Cooley (1902), and James (1890) suggested that one’s concept of self is developed, maintained and modified through individual experiences and social interactions. The symbolic-interactionist perspective (Stone, 1962) constructs meanings for the individual through social interactions. Participants described their “own style”, in relation to their peers, and as more individualistic and affecting their purchasing behavior by shopping at designer stores and by themselves.

I would actually trying hard to develop my own style. I don't catch the trends that much so when I were in the States, it was probably the same story not that different to tell the difference before and after...No. This is probably the only thing that is consistent, from the past until now and maybe still the future. I don't look

for styles from fashion magazines or my peers, although I think I am still under the influence of whatever I saw from magazines, or around in the store, or my peers. But I tend to have a high interest in developing my own style, so I actually I think nowadays I would check the designer stores. Because you do not easily get the same things with others if you buy things from designer stores. (Participant #2)

I guess it expresses your confidence of choosing whatever you like. I think and also because I have been making explorations of different styles and I made mistakes, and when I talked about confidence one thing that is sort of like the Western style of living, making, trying to find yourself as an individual, but not relying or living in the opinion of others and that is reflected in your dress. But I guess in the beginning I never was somebody that was so collective, it's just you are more developed...I guess just I'm quite comfortable and confident about what I have chosen today for myself. Yeah, so that's how I would like people to perceive is that I can make that choice for myself, either the hairstyle, the jewelry, makeup, the shoes and also the dresses or pants or just everything match together. And I put them all together. (Participant #12)

### *Carefree Dress.*

Participants approached clothing purchases in a very carefree practice with a “freedom to do whatever you want” way of deciding what to wear. This approach to “do their own thing” in disregard of the needs of communities and ingroups is what Trandis, et al. (1988) found of individualists. Some participants exhibited these individualist consumption behaviors while growing up in Taiwan, living in the U.S. and upon returning to Taiwan.

Yeah and there was probably is something, something if, it's people will see something you eventually need to change because as I say I dressed according to my mood, but not for any particular occasion. And sometimes I don't really care about what people think about you...One thing that remained unchanged is that I said when I was in Taiwan I didn't care as much about how people look at my style; I guess it's the same in the United States. (Participant #12)

According to McCarty (1996), studying cultural value orientation is a good starting point to understand why people purchase certain goods. Cultural value orientation is also a powerful force in shaping consumer motivations and product choices (Tse, Belk, & Zhou, 1989).

Participants' cultural value orientation affected their consumption behaviors in many ways. Growing up in a collectivistic culture participants were taught by their culture to submissively accept cultural norms and hold their ingroup opinions in higher esteem than their own and in turn purchase dress that fit into these group expectations. Individualist value orientation, found in the United States, affected all participants where their value orientation changed to become more

individualistic upon returning to Taiwan. For some participants, their own nature leaned to a more individualistic orientation where they held their own goals in higher esteem than their peers and/or family. For these individuals, their styles and purchasing behaviors were very individualistic and they approached their dress in a carefree manner. For many participants, there was a blending of both home (collectivistic) and host (individualistic) cultural influences which manifested itself in a case by case dressing style in which the participant evaluated each situation and dressed in whatever she felt fit. Overall, dress was highly influenced by participants' cultural value orientation whether it was collectivist or individualist or a mixture of both.

### *Returning Taiwan*

#### *Individualistic Value Orientation*

Individualistic value orientation can be described as when an individual is independent from others, when her goals are not connected to group goals and her well-being can be defined as a satisfaction with the self. Individualism where the self is independent is dominant in Western cultures and rooted in the belief that individuals are separate, not connected (Trandis, 1999). Hui (1998) described individualists as people who are concerned with their individual interests, goals, and needs.

#### *U.S. changed participants value orientation.*

For several participants, their cultural value orientation changed after they lived in the United States and after they experienced life in an Individualist culture. Participants appreciated individuals, in the U.S., taking responsibility for their own actions and were influenced to adopt these more individualistic traits of making their own decisions, and doing what they liked. Trandis (1992) suggests collectivists change behavior, from cultural pressure, more easily than

individualists. As a result coming from a collectivistic country, participants may have been able to more easily change their attitudes and behaviors while they were living in the United States and adopted the cultural norms of their new ingroup.

I saw the difference, but I didn't interpret it that way. I think people are, actually were acting with more responsibilities about themselves so that is why they consider themselves more when they need to make the decision, because they need to be responsible for themselves... Before I felt I had more patience about people who complained about their situations all the time. I would spend my time comforting them and helping them to find their solutions. But after my stay in the States, I felt I gradually lost the patience and I would think that it is their responsibilities to find their own solution. I would lend my support emotionally and sometimes give them suggestions but normally think I don't have those responsibilities for them. (Participant #2)

I um, I guess that during the time I lived in the States I guess I was quite influenced by the individualism [I: Um-hum.] um, of the value in the States. So it was like um, when you um considered things, like when you tried to make decision or um, I tended to, to, to like think of what I think most is, what is most important to me, or like what I like most for, um, first. (Participant #3)

In the States there's no one, they won't judge you in anyway or they won't put you in a certain circle tells you how to do things, but in Taiwan it's more like people are trying to control you or telling you what, but in the States it's different; you can do whatever you like. (Participant #11)

## **Research Question Four**

### *Acculturation Outcomes*

Participants were asked about their acculturation and reacculturation experience regarding consumption practices related to dress and how they negotiated their roles and identity during their time in the U.S., their first outcome, and upon returning to Taiwan, their second outcome. Acculturation is defined as a process of an individual's change as influenced by home and host culture (Graves, 1967) and the "phenomena which results when groups of individuals from different cultures come into continuous first hand contact, which subsequent changes in the original culture patters of either or both groups" (Berry, 1980, p. 9). Reacculturation is defined as the process of an individual attempting to readjust upon reentry to their home culture (Adler, 1981; Rogers & Ward, 1993;; Rohrlich & Martin, 1991; Uehara, 1986).

Consumer acculturation is the obtainment of skills and knowledge important to consumer behavior specifically how an individual learns to buy and consume goods and what meanings they attribute to goods (Ward, 1974). Penaloza (1994, p. 33) describes consumer acculturation as “the general process of movement and adaptation to the consumer cultural environment in one country by persons from another country”. It is a process of learning and displaying consumption skills, knowledge and behaviors (Penaloza, 1989). According to Maldonado and Tansuhaj (1999), consumer acculturation consists of 3 phases: Pre-immigration, transition and outcomes. The focus of this section of analysis will be on transitions and outcomes, labeled as first outcome to the U.S., and second outcome, when participants returned to Taiwan.

Table 7. Acculturation Outcome Themes

Acculturation Outcomes	
First Outcome	Theme
Assimilation	Blending into casual dress
	Local shopping affected dress assimilation
Maintenance	Little time to change
Resistance	Resistance of revealing dress
Returning Outcome	Theme
	Home culture reacculturation
Assimilation	Peer pressure dressing
Maintenance	U.S. style maintenance importance
Resistance	Too Taiwanese

*First Outcome.*

Participants' first transition was to the United States, their host culture. They arrived in the United States between 1990 and 2000 and lived in their host culture from a minimum of 1 year to a maximum of 8 years. During this time, participants experienced a variety of acculturation outcomes from assimilation and resistance to host culture, and maintenance of home culture. Segregation was not an outcome for the participants, meaning that they did not physically and socially segregate themselves from their host, U.S., mainstream culture as they lived on university campuses and were surrounded by U.S. culture. If participants were to segregate, they would not be able to finish their degrees. Like this study, most acculturation studies have looked at ethnic minorities in individualistic cultures like the United States (Berry, 1980; Hui et al., 1992).

*Assimilation.*

Traditional assimilation models predict that behavioral patterns will become more like those of the host culture and less like the ones in the home culture (Berry, 1990). Penaloza (1994) noted one form of acculturation as assimilation but criticizes that research is not taking into consideration the diversity of U.S. consumer behavior. Penaloza (1994) describes Mexican immigrants assimilating through consumption patterns associated with U.S. consumer culture like clothing.

*Blending into casual dress.*

Some participants blended their Taiwanese influenced style dress to fit into the popular casual dress found in the United States. Participants gradually assimilated into the casual dress culture by dressing more casually and giving up the more formal wear of their home culture. Berry (1997) describes the strategy of assimilation as having a preference for the host culture and

adopting aspects of it and abandoning the original culture. Participants were seen using this assimilation strategy adopting products and services associated with their host consumer culture and abandoning their original culture. For some participants, they were not even aware they were assimilating their dress and with others they were very intentional in adapting to their new environment. All participants voluntarily immersed themselves and became more like members of the host culture (Berry, 1980).

Before I went to the States I think most of the American dress is pretty weird; it's too casually, yeah. It's totally different with Taiwan. But after I go to the States, I don't know why but somehow it just turns to be very natural, very really casual, but the comfortable, the comfort is the most important thing but before it was like you know the outfit how it looked is the most important thing. (Participant #11)

Umm...yes. At that time, I think I picked up from what I had. Particularly aiming at adapting myself to the new environment. Which means not to cause too much attention, because I had a difficult time then, so I did not want to cause any attention so I hope I would survive without too much attention from the people. But still I had to maintain my taste so Gap was probably at that time, the best interpretation of my mood. (Participant #2)

#### *Local shopping affected dress assimilation.*

Assimilation into U.S. dress culture was influenced by participants' shopping options as the only places to shop were what was within driving distance to the participants. The only clothing that was available to participants was what they could buy at the local stores, what they bought in catalogues and what they brought with them from Taiwan. In Oswald (1999) study of Haitian immigrants, the immigrants used goods to forge new identities, and garments became an accessory that was bought, sold, discarded and traded, and culture was seen as a commodity. In Mehta and Belk's (1991), study of Indian immigrants to the United States, they found that Indians in the U.S. found it difficult to obtain certain types of Indian food and over time decided to adopt American foods. The availability of clothing styles at the local stores affected participants' actual choices and affected participants' assimilation into U.S. dress culture. In Penaloza's (1994) study of Mexican immigrants to the United States, she found that the immigrants assimilated many products, specifically low-cost, high-visibility items such as

clothing. Their consumer acculturation was highly affected by their environment. These immigrants purchased many goods that were associated with American culture such as clothing like the participants in this study.

Um, I remember the first day I went there I went to outlet mall; I bought so many things and I just changed my way I dress right after I got there. (Participant #11)

I think I, yeah you tried to look at what people wear and then go to, because you would start buying clothes from the local shop and so you would try to kind of try to conform to the culture. (Participant #14)

Participants also were influenced by catalogs like Lands End and Victoria's Secret and these catalogs provided a visual reference on how they could assimilate into U.S. dress culture. They did not shop from these catalogs but used them as reference.

Well, [I: Or something else?] probably most are U.S. 'cause most of time I look at some like the you got the catalogue from the mail order, yeah. And I liked some those like the casual-wear brands. I remember there's a brand name starting with a C, but ah, I liked that one very much but I just forgot the name. (Participant #3)

I guess those shopping guides like Land Ends or they've got a lot of catalogues; and I reference those. (Participant #5)

Yeah, it was interesting because I did not actually look for style and fashion, telling from my life at that time, I was a student concentrating on studies most of the time. So the only information I could access was stores around campus, that was one. I remember there were like Express, the chain store, so fashion was there. And the other one that was very interesting was Victoria Secret. Because you got their catalog all the time so you spent your lunch time browsing through the pages. In addition to bras and under wears there were dresses as well. Not just Victoria Secret, it reminded me of the other one Land's End. In those catalogs you get to see comfortable dressing like this, very familiar styles, that I could see from catalogues you can see from Land's End, Victoria's Secret. I think that affected my taste. I started to like the comfortable style, the simple style particularly what appeared in the US catalogues. (Participant #2)

### *Maintenance.*

Participants maintained aspects of their consumption behavior from their home culture to maintain ties with their previous culture (Penaloza, 1994). In her study of Mexican immigrants, Penaloza (1994) found the immigrants maintained aspects of their home culture through phone contact, media, food and leisure activities. Kim and Arthur's (2003) study on the strength of ethnic identification among Asian American consumer's attitudes toward wearing ethnic apparel found that consumers' ethnic identification strength impacted the consumption of ethnic apparel.

Similarly in Mehta and Belk's (1991) research on the favorite possessions of Indian immigrants, many items were brought from India and were brought to affirm ties to their home culture. Like the Indian immigrants, participants maintained their Taiwanese culture by bringing clothes they had bought in Taiwan with them to the United States.

*Little time to change.*

Participants lived in the U.S. for a few years. Because of this short time span, several participants maintained styles they wore in Taiwan as they had "no time to change". Participants' time in the U.S. ranged from 1 to 8 years, their length of stay did not seem to affect participants dress to change more or less. During this transition phase, roles were destabilized, and possessions became tied to an anchoring identity in their home culture (Mehta & Belk, 1991). Participants wore the clothing they brought with them from Taiwan because they didn't have time to change their dress style to fit into U.S. culture and maybe also because it tied them to their home culture.

I pretty much wore the same because I was only there one year.  
No time to change. (Participant #15)

Um... 'Cause um, I guess I didn't think there's much that much difference in the, in the dress style between the Taiwanese and the Americans. [I: Okay.] Probably a little bit in some way or in some certain cities, but probably that much difference, so um it, it wasn't, it wasn't a big issue or I didn't wear of like did I have I ever try to blend the two together. (Participant #3)

*Resistance.*

Penaloza (1994) found that Mexican immigrants resisted, or disliked, varying degrees of materialism in the United States, isolation, discrimination and time fixation that they associated with U.S. culture and disliked. Participant, in the present sample, also resisted aspects of host culture (i.e., U.S.) during their time in the United States, mainly the revealing dress that was prevalent in U.S. dress culture.

### *Resistance of revealing dress.*

Participants resisted the revealing aspects of dress in the United States, specifically low cut tops and bikinis women wore in the U.S. According to Andreasen (1984), consumers tend to persist in the thought patterns and behaviors they are accustomed too. Participants thought patterns about revealing and low cut dress was already developed in their home culture of Taiwan and these individual cultural opinions about what was appropriate persisted during their time in the United States.

If there was too exposed or too low, or too inappropriate. I would resist. (Participant #10)

Well, I, I, I just can't try bikini. (Participant #7)

Participants first acculturation outcome was heavily influenced by their school environment as well as the amount of time the participants lived in the United States. Participants assimilated into the casual consumer culture easily by shopping locally with the desire to fit in. Some participants did not find time to change their dress style and just wore the clothes they brought with them and others did not notice a difference between U.S. and Taiwanese college campus dress. Participants did resist the revealing aspects of U.S. dress and did not appreciate this aspect of U.S. consumer culture. The ease that participants acculturated into U.S. consumer culture may be because of their collectivistic home culture influence where they may have been able to handle more discrepancies between attitude and behavior than individualists (Trandis, 1992).

### *Returning Outcome.*

Participant's second outcome, or returning outcome, occurred when they returned to their home culture of Taiwan. Participants returned to Taiwan mainly because they were planning on returning and more specifically because they finished their degrees and were returning to enter the work force. Most participants experienced assimilation into home culture, maintenance of

U.S. styles, and resistance to certain aspects of Taiwanese dress but did not experience segregation where the individual would physically and socially segregate themselves from Taiwanese mainstream culture. During participants' reacculturation we see evidence of Berry's (1980) view of acculturation as a bi-directional process being measured in two dimensions: the degree of adoption of the host culture, U.S., and the degree of holding onto home culture, Taiwan, or in case of participants holding on to their host culture, U.S. Through the reacculturation process and the experience of host and home culture has created a new identity for participants (Kim 2010; Sussman, 2000).

*Home culture reacculturation.*

Participants still had to acculturate upon returning to their home culture. Although participants grew up in Taiwan, they felt they had to acculturate into their home culture. Participant 13 returned to Taiwan and felt confused about what to wear and how to adapt to her new environment and the demands that came with it.

Yes. Yes sure. The first year and some kind of you know confusion. I prefer to dress casually, [I: Um-hum.] but I'm in Taiwan, and most of the people around me doesn't approve me to dress casually. Because they say, "Wow, you are teacher. How can you dress jeans, t-shirt and come to school? No, no way." [I: Um-hum.] So I'm some kind of confusion. Yeah. I need to adapt; I need to adapt the environmental demands of the um, of the Taiwanese. Yeah. (Participant #13)

Martin (1984) highlights that people expect cultural differences and a certain amount of shock and adjustment when entering a host culture but no such expectations exist on returning to a home culture. Also, when students go abroad, they go at an age when they are formulating their core values and beliefs. This shaping of values in a foreign culture may find these individuals returning to their home culture different people with different values. Martin (1984) describes this individual as a "sojourner" who is not always aware of the changes that have taken place upon returning to their home culture. Participants returned to Taiwan and experienced a certain amount of culture shock and a large amount of change in their consumption behaviors.

### *Assimilation.*

Participants assimilated into home culture by adopting products and services and learning new styles associated with Taiwan consumer culture. Participants felt pressure from peers to dress more formally than they were dressing in the U.S. Also, because of their age change, participants were older than the last time they lived in Taiwan, and because of this reason dress expectations had changed for them. In Neto's (2010) study of reacculturation from adolescent Portuguese immigrants re-entering their home culture, integration, or assimilation, was the most preferred reacculturation attitude. Like these Portuguese immigrants, participants felt a need to assimilate back into Taiwanese culture. When individuals assimilate, the experience becomes more like a "pressure cooker" (Berry 1997).

### *Peer pressure dressing.*

Participants felt pressure from their peers to assimilate and dress in the popular styles of dress in Taiwan, specifically not to dress too casually but more formally. Unlike the assimilation process for participants in their first outcome, where they adopted the casual clothing styles not because of pressure, but because of a gradual process of integration, assimilation back into their home culture was more negative because of peer pressure to dress more formally. Martin (1984) found that relationships with friends were affected negatively when individuals reentered their home culture, and these negative influences affected their reentry adjustment, making it more difficult.

I can wear tank top without the outfit like without a white top yeah, but when I came back I have to wear the jacket or something, I have to cover a little bit because if you are showing your shoulder too much or something people will be like looking at you, you know. It's kind of uncomfortable. (Participant #11)

Yes. Yes sure. The first year and some kind of you know confusion. I prefer to dress casually, [I: Um-hum.] but I'm in Taiwan, and most of the people around me doesn't approve me to dress casually. Because they say, "Wow, you are teacher. How can you dress jeans, t-shirt and come to school? No, no way." [I: Um-hum.] So I'm some kind of confusion. Yeah. I need to adapt; I need to adapt the environmental demands of the um, of the Taiwanese. (Participant #13)

### *Maintenance.*

Participants maintained aspects of consumption patterns they acquired during their time in the United States. In Penaloza's (1994) study of Mexican immigrants, the Mexican immigrants maintained aspects of their home culture, participants also maintained aspects of their host culture upon returning to their home culture.

### *U.S. style maintenance importance.*

Maintenance of American style was more important to participants than maintaining Taiwanese style from their first outcome. Participants felt it was important to maintain their casual style preferences because their tastes in clothing had changed from their experiences in the United States. This American style influence affected their dress and their dress reflected the casual styles they wore in the U.S. Thompson and Christofi's (2007) study of returning sojourners described their experience in comparison with their home and host cultures. Like these sojourners, participants compared their home and host culture when describing their style and maintained the casual style that they saw in the United States.

Um...I would say when I came back to Taiwan in 2000, the first year I come back, um I am influenced by U.S. culture. [I: Um-hum.] So, most of my dress more casual, even I have a class, [I: When you have a class, okay.] yeah, the first year. The first semester I think so, yes. [I: Um-hum.] Yeah...I would say when I came back to Taiwan the first year, um, I like the dress style in United States. [I: United States?] I think it's more easier, more friendly, more casual. I don't like the "you need to dress very formally." [I: Uh-huh.] Yeah...Hum, yeah, (Participant #13)

In Christofi and Thompson's (2007) study of study abroad students, they found that the students' identities changed. They described themselves in new ways because of the experiences they had with others in their host country. Most participants also found their experience in the West changed their taste in clothing and they described themselves in new and different ways.

### *Resistance.*

Participants resisted aspects of Taiwanese consumer culture, specifically anything that was "too Taiwanese". In Rosalind's (2011) study of the re-integration of Taiwanese and Sri

Lankan graduates after studying in the West, he found many students underwent a reverse culture shock akin to bereavement, involving stages of a grieving process. Participants experienced this “reverse culture shock” upon returning to Taiwan and resisted the formal, colorful and flashy Taiwanese styles. Just as entry into a new culture may result in “culture shock”, re-entry into a home culture may be followed by reverse culture shock. Reverse culture shock can be defined as “temporal psychological difficulties returnees experience in the initial stage of the adjustment process at home after having lived abroad for some time” (Uehara, 1983, p. 420). In Christofi and Thompson’s (2007) study of returning sojourners, they found the returning students experienced an internal conflict and described their experience as having one foot in each country, making it difficult to have a solid footing in any place. Like these sojourners, participants also felt like they had one foot in each country. Participant 3 experienced “culture shock” through her interaction with her parents that made her feel like a foreigner.

Um, say, ah, like in for many people when they lived overseas for quite a while, then when they come back especially to live with your family again, usually you would have some like culture shock. [I: Uh-huh.] Yeah, and I had that experience probably say during the first half a year when I got back here...And just like you, like your parents consider you a foreigner. (Participant #3)

*Too Taiwanese.*

Dress, was seen by participants, as “too Taiwanese” or “Tai Ke”, dress that was very Taiwanese, was described as having no taste or style. Dress that was too Taiwanese was linked to dress that reflected Japanese style which was characterized by being cutesy and looked like little girl style. Christofi and Thompson’s (2007) found that students returning to their home culture experienced culture shock as well as the feeling of disappointment. Like these returning students, most participants did not want to dress in this style and were uncomfortable with clothing that was “too Taiwanese”. Even the description of being “too Taiwanese” shows that participants felt separate from their home culture.

Ummm...Sometimes, because I think Taiwanese dress, or Taiwanese they don't have any taste. So, sometimes I want to separate. If someone comments your style is very Taiwanese that means you have no taste. (Participant #10)

I guess the biggest change is probably turning away from the Japanese style, the kind of cutesy little girl like style, which you probably still see a lot of here. I guess that's one thing that after I came back it's something I don't like to see because it has a feeling that you dress almost like everybody else dresses like that and there's just no individual style. (Participant #12)

Participants experienced two acculturation outcomes, the first when they acculturated to U.S. host culture, and secondly when they re-acculturated to home Taiwanese culture.

Participants experienced “culture shock” “a disease precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse” (Oberg, 1960, p. 177). Reverse culture shock is seen as the “temporal psychological difficulties returnees experience in the initial stage of the adjustment process at home after having lived abroad for some time” (Uehara, 1983 p. 420). Surprisingly, reacculturation was harder for participants than acculturating to a host culture. Re-acculturating into home culture could be seen as a bigger life change because when participants returned to their home culture they transitioned into the work environment from being a student their whole lives. Like Penaloza’s (1994) study of Mexican immigrants individuals experienced assimilation, maintenance and resistance but did not experience separation. Along with experiencing different acculturation outcomes, participants experienced different stages of change as outlined by Oberg (1960), the “honeymoon”, “rejection”, “tolerance” and “integration” stage. Participant 2 experienced all 4 stages in moving to the host culture, she liked the Western styles when she first arrived, the “honeymoon” stage, but rejected “rejection stage” the tight styles. She tolerated overall Western style “tolerance stage” and developed her own style “integration stage” which consisted of simple style clothing. Upon returning back to her home culture, Participant 2 went through the same transition of changing her clothing to what was popular in the local stores, rejecting her school style, tolerating the

Taiwanese style and ultimately keeping and adapting “integrating” the comfortable ‘Gap’ style she came to like upon returning.

Yes. I think so. I think so. After the stay in the States. I actually changed my style from the long skirt, Chinese style to more Western style. Yes, I would start to love styles like Ann Taylor. It's very different from the previous style I had, because the previous one was long skirts, not tight one not fitted one, but with those styles I developed in the States were actually more, most of them were fitted short dress, very simple style, very comparatively modern. It was very different between the student style and the styles you could see from the stores. So I think after coming back I think I actually adopted those styles I learned from the fashion stores and I got rid of the school styles...I think I still wear those comfortable clothing as I did at school, like the Gap style, but very quickly I think moved toward my fashion. (Participant #2)

Participants all experienced reacculturation back into Taiwanese culture. To their surprise, participants found this transition to be more difficult than the first transition. Martin (1984) also found that people expected cultural differences and a certain amount of culture shock entering a host culture but did not have these expectations upon returning to their home which effected their experience returning. Participants’ main reason to assimilate into Taiwanese culture was because of negative feedback from peers, the reason for assimilation into Taiwanese culture was much different then the reasons participants assimilated into U.S. culture and much more negative. Participants maintained their U.S. casual style and this style became important to them and showed a shift in their dress preference. Unlike the first transition, participants did not accidently maintain their style because of the amount of time, they wanted to maintain the casual style preference they developed in the U.S. Participants resisted styles that were “too Taiwanese”, any styles that were too colorful, flashy and cutesy Japanese inspired. Upon returning, this style was easily identified and rejected. The only consistency in both acculturation outcomes was that participants did not experience segregation of any kind from home or host culture. Segregation was not experienced in both outcomes because all participants did not physically segregate themselves but instead immersed themselves into the culture they lived in.

### *Returnee Consumer Acculturation Model*

Strauss (1995) states that theorists do not need to justify the assumptions in borrowed procedures but can employ the methods that are relevant to the research problem in borrowing methods and theories from other disciplines. A Returnee Consumer Acculturation model borrowed from Maldonado and Tansuhaj's (1999) (Figure 2) and Penaloza's (1994) (Figure 1) models of consumer acculturation have been adapted for this research to fit a group of individuals who have transitioned from home to host and back to home culture. As there is limited research that studies women in transition from home to host and back to home again, Figure 3 is being proposed based on the findings of this study to further understand consumer acculturation among young Chinese females from Taiwan who grew up in a collectivistic culture, have studied in the United States (individualist culture) and then returned to work in Taiwan. The data informed the development of this model and has emerged from data analysis. Figure 3 shows that individual differences and cultural agents of host and home affect the process of the individual's dress role adjustment of movement, transition, and adaptation, which in turn will determine their experience in the United States and ultimately result in one or more of Penaloza's (1994) four outcomes. Individual differences, highlighted in Penaloza's (1994) empirical model, are emphasized in Figure 3 as a starting point. This study does not examine the effects of demographic, gender and age characteristics on acculturation outcomes but does focus on cultural value orientation and language preference on outcomes. In participants first transition consumer acculturation agents of family, peers, magazine and celebrity influence and self concept were large influences from their consumer culture of origin (Taiwan). Influencing agents from participant's consumer culture of host (U.S.) was their language experience, peer and their own self concept. Both these acculturation influencing agents influenced their individual

role adjustment that was effected by their role identity and their living and shopping environment. One or more of Penaloza's (1994) consumer acculturation outcomes of assimilation, maintenance and resistance resulted in participants first transition to the United States. In participant's second transition influencing agent's from host culture were western individualist cultural influence and self-concept. Peers and self-concept were important influencing elements of Taiwan's consumer culture of origin (Taiwan). Ultimately, after each transition, moving to the U.S. and returning to Taiwan, one or more of Penaloza's (1994) four outcomes may result. There is also the possibility that a consumer acculturation outcome that is not listed in Figure 3 may result.

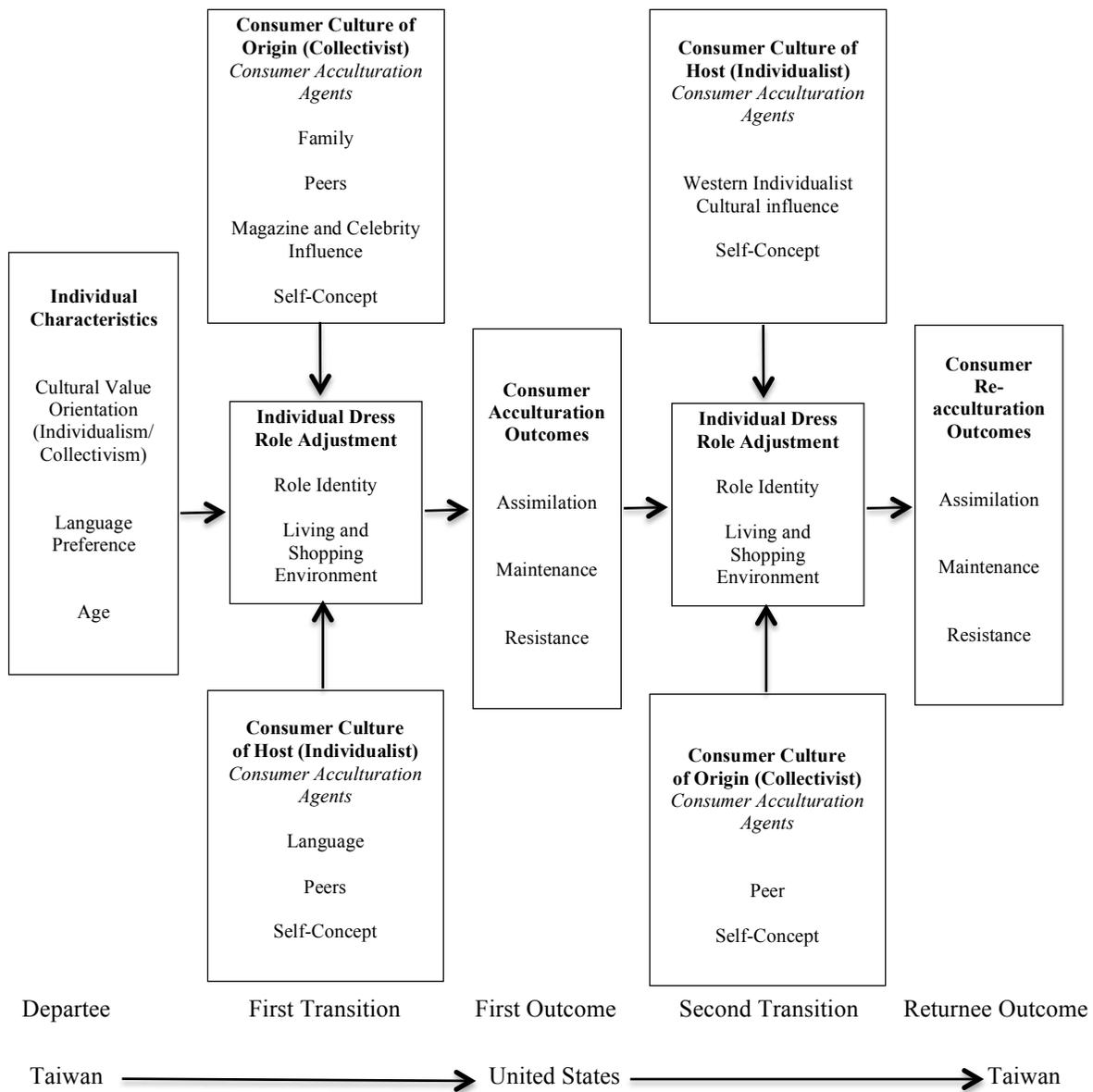


Figure 3. Model of Consumer Reacculturation of Dress for Chinese women from Taiwan who studied in the U.S. and returned to Taiwan to live.

Figure 3 has been informed by the data in this study and is limited to the specific experience of these participants. Because of the limited sample size, sampling approach, exploratory nature of the research, these findings cannot be generalized beyond this study. Figure

3 has inspired a generalized model, Figure 4, derived from Figure 3, specifically looking at returnees who are from Collectivist cultures entering an Individualist culture and returning to their home culture.

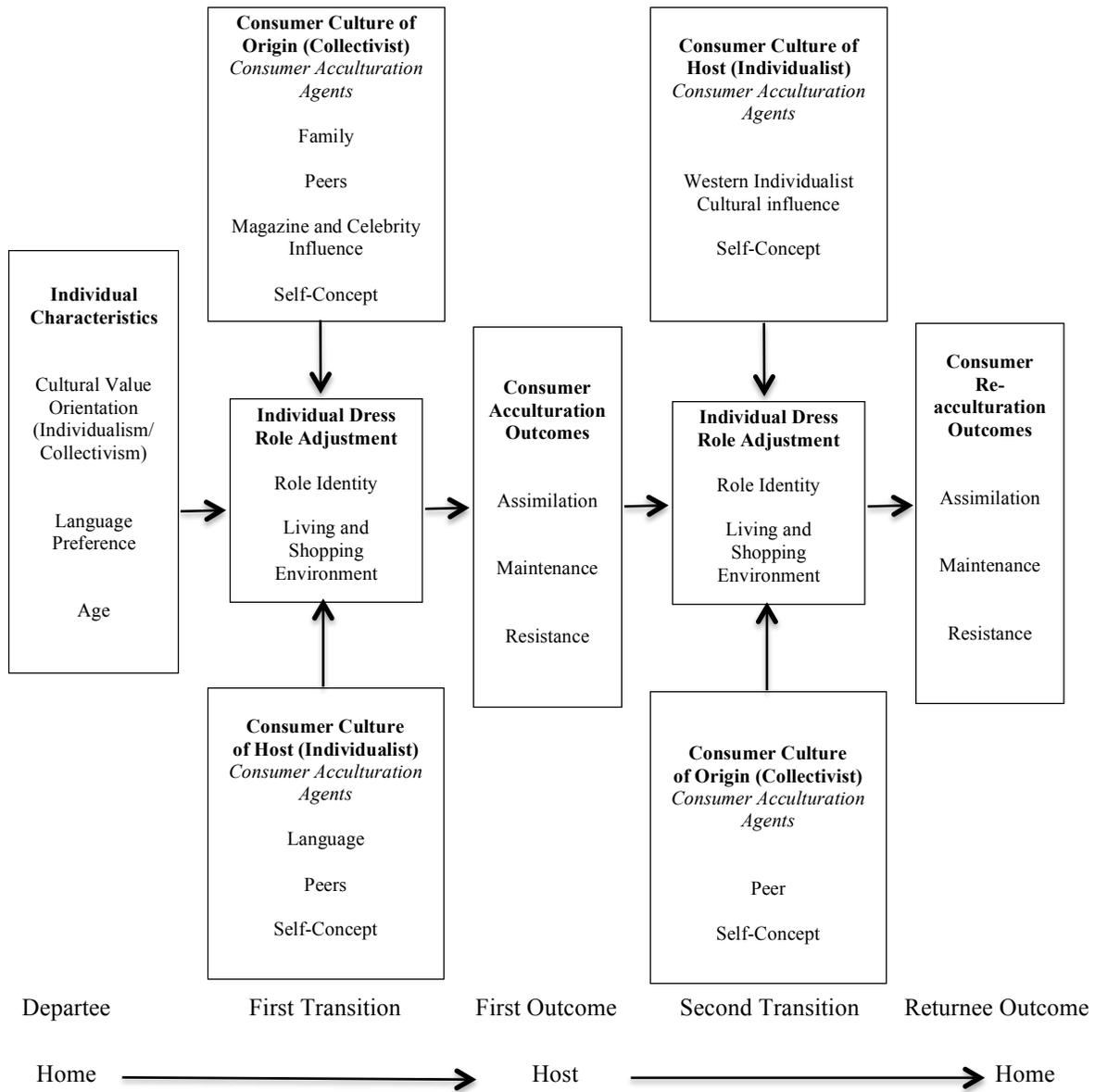


Figure 4. Model of Consumer Reacculturation of Dress for Returnees.

## CHAPTER V

### Conclusions

The purpose of this interpretive study is to qualitatively analyze the process of consumer acculturation through consumption practices related to dress by which Chinese women from Taiwan negotiated their roles and identity. A holistic perspective was used as a lens to help understand how these young Chinese women transitioned from home to host and back to home culture.

This study focuses on young Chinese females from Taiwan who grew up through their high school years in Taiwan, studied in the United States for their undergraduate or graduate degrees, and returned to Taiwan to live and work. Consumer acculturation has been taken one step further with the introduction of the reacclimation process where individuals from their home culture immigrate to a host culture and then return to their home culture.

#### **Summary of Findings**

##### *Research Question One*

Participants' were asked how their perception of their own dress practices changed and/or remained stable as they moved between the cultures of Taiwan, United States and then returning to Taiwan. Perception has been defined as any thoughts and/or beliefs about dress.

Participant's perception of dress, while they grew up in Taiwan, was primarily influenced by school restrictions but an even stronger influence and restrictive enforcement was their ingroup expectations. Participants felt controlled by others and cared what they thought and generally had a negative perception of Taiwanese dress and felt dress in Taiwan was ugly, formal and influenced by Japanese style.

Participants grew up in a culture that was already saturated with Western media and products. Through observations and interactions within the U.S., participants developed their own perceptions of U.S. dress. They felt that U.S. dress was the land of the free, comfortable and sexy dress and the majority of participants began to prefer the natural, casual and comfortable U.S. styles but they did reject the sexy and revealing aspects of U.S. dress. Regional distinction were also made between East (formal), West Coast (casual), and Midwest dress (sloppy). Some perceptions changed after living in the U.S., and when they did change, it was typically positive.

Upon returning to Taiwan from the United States, all participants began new roles as working professionals and mothers. This resulted in new dress expectations, and in some cases, negotiations and preferences were influenced by their experience in the U.S. In other cases, women blended styles, and still other cases, women reintegrated into home cultural dress expectations. Social feedback from their home culture contributed to women's perception of dress and what they actually wore. Participants found their time in the U.S. was an exploratory season to find their style. Their perceptions about their home culture changed after living in the U.S., and they found they did not like the styles back in Taiwan. What participants did like was the variety in Taiwanese clothing available to purchase.

Participants' perceptions of dress were not fixed, but were constantly constructed and reconstructed through their environment and role identity. Participants' environment from Taiwanese schools to U.S. campus casual to returning Taiwan work environment influenced their perception of dress. The biggest influence on perception of their own dress was their U.S. experience because they preferred the casual U.S. styles to Taiwanese dress. Once they returned to Taiwan, participants had a negative perception of Taiwanese dress and found that it was too Taiwanese, too colorful, too Japanese. Despite their dress perceptions being influenced by

environmental expectations, actual dress decisions were more influenced by environmental expectations, i.e., work expectations and expected business style upon returning to Taiwan. Environmental expectations did remain stable for participants, where Taiwanese ingroups influenced participants' perceptions both before the U.S. and upon returning. This influence was typically negative whereas the U.S. environmental influence was seen as a positive experience.

### *Research Question Two*

Participants were asked what factors gave rise to the negotiation of their roles and identity in Taiwan, the United States and when they returned back to Taiwan. Specifically looking at the general practices, actions and/or behaviors, they used to negotiate their roles and identity through consumption practices related to dress.

Role identity, the participant's role in relation to others, specifically the roles of student and working professional were influential and determined consumption practices related to dress. In Taiwan, the role of student determined participants' actual dress by restricting their dress to school appropriate clothing but more restrictive was participants' ingroups' negative input, which was more influential than school dress codes because participants were called out for not dressing appropriately. Student dress in the U.S. was casual and participants' dressed accordingly and preferred this type of dress. This U.S. casual clothing effect influenced participants returning dress to be more casual as they preferred the U.S. brands and styles more than the styles they found back in Taiwan. They dressed in casual styles when they were not working or had formal obligations. Career appropriateness was an important strategy for participants in the work place. All of the participants wanted to wear career appropriate dress to work. Business environment expectations affected participant's actual dress. Accessory differentiation was also used by participants to differentiate between special and casual occasions.

Self-concept is similar to role identity in that a role does not exist without other relevant roles (Turner, 1962), but focuses more on the self than the role in comparison to others.

Participants described their “own style” in comparison to their peers and as different from them. Participants used their “own style” to construct, reconstruct, and negotiate their dress sense in Taiwan, the U.S. and upon returning to Taiwan. In Taiwan, participants’ concept of their own style was influenced by social expectations like being a good girl and dressing formally at a formal event. Participants negotiated their own style through others’ expectations and modified their dress to fit in.

In the U.S. participants’ own style was defined as comfortable and casual styles or what they called “Gap” style. Participants not only dressed casually, but also dressed in Taiwanese culturally inspired dress, such as Asian prints and qipao style garments, and felt pride in wearing Taiwanese style clothing and maybe for the first time felt pride in wearing these representations of their home culture. Several participants found it easy to change their own style from their original Taiwanese style to a more Western style. Participants borrowed and bought the easy and comfortable styles found in the U.S. and adopted these to form a new identity. Participants used symbolic self-completion theory (Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1981) in their adoption of U.S. casual clothing styles to communicate this new identity to others.

Participants’ life and age change influenced their “own style” to adapt to these changes. For these participants, their residence changed from the United States to Taiwan, their job changed, and some participants got married when they returned to Taiwan. Because of these life status and age changes, participants began to dress more maturely and formally. Participants’ “own style” was influenced by their role in their environment which then influenced how they understood their identity and in turn determined how they dressed in comparison to their peers.

Consumer acculturation agents that affected participants' consumer behavior in Taiwan were predominantly family members, specifically mothers, sisters and fathers. Window shopping, beauty salons, celebrities, magazines and peers influenced participants' consumer behaviors.

While growing up in Taiwan, participants' mothers had a very influential role in insuring participants were appropriately dressed. Participants' sisters had a large influence on participants' actual wardrobe and gave a lot of input on what the participants should wear. Older sisters would give advice to participants about what to wear and sometimes their feedback was negative. Fathers were seen in a positive light by the participants, unlike their mothers and sisters, fathers were described as mostly concerned with participants not dressing sexy. Peer responses framed participants' own thoughts of their dress. Participant's perception of dress was shaped by the responses of their peers and these responses were typically negative. Participants were told by peers not to dress casually in Taiwan, but despite this negative feedback, participants continued to dress casually. Because of this negative feedback, participants shopped more by themselves upon returning to Taiwan than before. They also experienced positive feedback from husbands and friends upon returning. Family and friend responses were influential in actual dress consumption practices. Their response determined what participants actually bought, what they wore and who they shopped with. Some participants shopped by themselves, but others who shopped with friends sought out the feedback of friends.

"Lifestyle shopping" was an important strategy participants used to shop for dress that represented the U.S. casual style culture they liked. Local shopping was the only option for participants when they studied in the United States. With local shopping, participants had to speak English to shop owners, those who felt comfortable with the English language had an

overall better experience in the United States because of this ability to communicate and consume the culture.

Another strategy participants used was case-by-case dressing, which resulted when they changed their clothing depending on the situation. More formal situations called for more formal dress and casual situations called for casual dress. Situational dress expectations were a theme for all participants where they would dress according to the occasion.

Consumer acculturation agents that affected participants consumer behavior upon transitioning back to Taiwan were peer responses which were both negative and positive, family responses, work expectations and shopping changes. Again, participant's age change and work expectations affected women's role and identity and influenced their consumption practices. Participants returned to Taiwan older and at a different stage in life than when they left. Most participants were entering the work force and embarking on a new stage in life, they were making more money and had the means to buy the clothes they wanted. Participants' styles were very diverse and reflected their age change, work expectations and special event expectation.

### *Research Question Three*

Participants were asked how their cultural value orientations, of collectivism and/or individualism, related to their consumption practices related to dress. In Taiwan, participants' cultural value orientation was more collectivist, submissive to cultural expectations, than individualist, when they lived in the U.S. and upon returning. When they grew up in Taiwan, they submitted to others as well as the Taiwanese education culture, both of which influenced the participants' value orientation. Participants described submitting to their family and to their educational system where they did not question the authorities in their lives and submissively obeyed whatever these authorities decided. Because of this submissivine cultural value

orientation, participants' felt ingroup buying pressure and referenced their families, specifically their mothers and sisters, as well as peers in buying products so they could fit in. Not only did participants' conform to dress in Taiwan, they did so in the U.S. because of their collectivistic cultural value orientation. They would buy clothes to conform to the casual U.S. dress culture.

Some participants felt intrinsically different than their home culture and felt that they were different and more individualistic than their peers and family and knew while they were growing up their value orientation was different than the collectivistic Taiwanese culture. These participants had a harder time growing up in Taiwan than the participants who were more collectivistic, they felt more at home in the U.S. For those who were more collectivistic, living in the U.S. did change their value orientation. Participants appreciated individuals, in the U.S., taking responsibility for their own actions and were influenced to adopt these more individualistic traits of making their own decisions, and doing what they liked. Not only did living in the U.S. change participants' cultural value orientation but participant's personality influenced their value orientation which in turn influenced their buying behavior.

Participants' own style, confidence and sense of freedom influenced their purchasing behavior. They described their own style as different from those of their peers. With their change in cultural value orientation to individualism, this in turn affected their purchasing behavior and as they enjoyed shopping by themselves and at designer stores. Overall, dress was highly influenced by participants' cultural value orientation whether it was collectivist or individualist or a mixture of both.

#### *Research Question Four*

Participants were asked about their acculturation experience regarding consumption practices related to dress and how they negotiated their roles and identity during their time in the

U.S., their first outcome, and upon returning to Taiwan, their second outcome. Chau (2009) suggests the idea of a "salad bowl", which is the concept that suggests the integration of many cultures. This idea represents the multicultural culture we live in where a coexistence of different races, ethnic groups and culture.

Participants' first acculturation outcomes were heavily influenced by their school environments, as well as the time they lived in the United States. Participants assimilated into the casual consumer culture easily by shopping locally with the desire to fit into popular casual dress. They gradually assimilated into the casual dress culture by dressing more casually and giving up the more formal wear of their home culture. Some participants were not aware they were assimilating their dress and while others they were very intentional in adapting to their new environment. Some participants did not find time to change their dress style and just wore the clothes they brought with them and others did not notice a difference between U.S. and Taiwanese college campus dress. Participants did resist the revealing aspects of U.S. dress, like low cut tops and bikinis, and did not appreciate this aspect of U.S. consumer culture. Participants did not experience segregation because they did not physically and socially segregate themselves from U.S. culture.

Participants' second outcomes, or returning outcomes, occurred when they returned to their home culture of Taiwan. Participants returned to Taiwan mainly because they were planning on returning but more specifically because they finished their degrees and were returning to enter the work force and be closer to family. Most participants experienced assimilation into home dress culture. Participants felt pressure from their peers to assimilate and dress in the popular styles of dress in Taiwan, specifically not dress too casually but more formally. Unlike the assimilation process for participants in their first outcome, where they

adopted the casual clothing styles not because of pressure but because of a gradual process of integration, assimilation back into their home culture was a negative experience. Participants maintained U.S. style because it was more important to participants to maintain their casual style preferences because their tastes in clothing had change from their experiences in the United States. Participants resisted dress that was seen by participants as “too Taiwanese” or “Tai Ke”, in which dress was very Taiwanese and was described as having no taste or style. Participants did not experience physical and social segregation from Taiwanese mainstream culture but they still had to acculturate upon returning to their home culture. Although participants grew up in Taiwan, they felt that they had to acculturate into their home culture.

Participants experienced two acculturation outcomes, the first when they acculturated to U.S. host culture, and second when they re-acculturated to their home Taiwanese culture. Surprisingly, reacculturation was harder for participants than acculturating to a host culture. Re-acculturating into their home culture was seen as a bigger life change because when participants returned to their home culture, they transitioned into the work environment from being a student their whole lives. The only consistency in both acculturation outcomes was that participants did not experience segregation of any kind from home or host culture.

### **Theoretical Implications**

This study confirms existing literature as well as adding new insights to the theories of role identity, self concept, and cultural value orientation. This study expands the consumer acculturation research and addresses the reacculturation process for individuals returning to their home culture. Consumer acculturation models have also been expanded to include the reacculturation process (Figure 3).

Existing consumer acculturation models by Maldonado and Tansuhaj's (1999) (Figure 2) and Penaloza's (1994) (Figure 1) were adapted for this research to include reacculturation outcomes. As there are no models currently understanding women in transition from home to host and back to home again, Figure 3 was proposed based on the findings of this study to further understanding of consumer acculturation and reacculturation among young Chinese females from Taiwan who grew up in a collectivistic culture, studied in the United States (individualist culture) and then returned to work in Taiwan. Previous research on reacculturation of students returning to their home culture found they experienced a great deal of culture shock as well as the feeling of disappointment upon returning to their home culture (Christofi & Thompson, 2007). Consistent with previous research, this study found that the process of reacculturation was much harder for participants than acculturating to the host culture of the United States. Reacculturating into their own home culture was more difficult for participants than acculturating into a new culture because they were returning to enter the work force after being a student their whole lives. Unlike previous research on reacculturation, however, this study found that returnees not only had negative experiences but they also had positive reacculturation experiences. Specifically, participants reacculturating had negative perceptions of Taiwanese dress and experienced negative ingroup pressure to assimilate when they returned. But unlike previous reacculturation research, participants' experience was not all negative, they also had positive experiences reacculturating such as living closer to family, enjoying the variety of dress in Taiwan, and enjoying their new individualistic value orientation that translated into putting their own needs above others. This contribution to reacculturation research shows that reacculturation is a multidimensional process. Returnees chose to return to be closer to family, they enjoyed the variety of dress available in Taiwan, and they enjoyed their new individualistic

value orientation that translated into putting their own needs above others. Similar to consumer acculturation research, this study shows that cultural value orientation and language preference had an influence on acculturation outcomes. Also, segregation was not an outcome in both outcomes, participants did not physically or socially segregate themselves from home or host culture.

Role identity was an important theme where the participant's role in relation to others influenced consumption practices related to dress. Similar to Littrell and Evers' (1985) study of liturgical vestments of Catholic priests found that changes in priests clothing changed as the expected definition of their role changed, similarly this was found with the participants, as their role changed, so did their clothing. More importantly, participant's role determined what they actually wore. When participants were students, they dressed as students and when they were at work they dressed in career appropriate clothing. Previous research has looked at role identity and its role in consumption practices related to dress (Littrell & Evers, 1985); however, this study further examines the connection between role identity and consumer acculturation outcomes in a cross-cultural context. This study shows that as an individual's role changes in a different cultural environment, her dress changes to either assimilate, maintain or resist their new role. For example, returnees entering the work force changed their dress to look more professional to assimilate into their new work environment, maintained their casual dress preferences outside of the workplace, and resisted popular Taiwanese dress in general. As roles changed for participants, their dress either assimilated to new expectations, maintained old preferences, or resisted cultural norms.

Self-concept is similar to role identity in that a role does not exist without other relevant roles (Turner, 1962), but focuses more on the self than the role. Mead (1934), Cooley (1902),

and James (1890) theorized that self-concept is a global perception of who one is. These theorists felt that one's concept of self is developed, maintained, and modified through individual experiences and social interactions. This symbolic-interactionist perspective in constructing meanings through social interaction (Stone, 1962) has been defined by participants as their "own style" in relation to others. The production of one's "own style" was a negotiation between individual expression and group cohesiveness. This negotiation was seen when participants grew up in Taiwan, where they began referring to their "own style" as different from others and being unique. Participants also negotiated their 'own style' through other's expectations and modified their dress to fit into the 'group look'. In the U.S. participants saw a casual change in their "own style" and their style became more like the styles found in the U.S. Participant's "own style" returning to Taiwan represented the style they grew to like in the U.S., casual, comfortable and free of expectations. Participants used "lifestyle shopping" (Shields, 1992, p. 2) to create the individualistic identity they formed in the U.S. In Oswald's (1999) study of Haitian immigrants, he found that first-generation immigrants exemplifying this "lifestyle shopping" and calls it a kind of culture swapping, in which the immigrant negotiates differences between their home and host culture. They "swap cultures" by swapping goods, moving between multiple worlds rather than blending. Similarly, participants' time in the United States presented them with a new environment and new products to buy and consume. Their new casual environment resulted in many participants consuming comfortable and casual styles because they liked the U.S. lifestyle and these clothes represented this lifestyle. In Metha and Belk's (1991) study of Indian immigrants to the United States, they found that the immigrants used "security blankets" to gain a sense of security in a new culture. These transitional objects provided a sense of cultural identity that might have been taken for granted in their home culture. Participants felt pride in

wearing Taiwanese style clothing and maybe for the first time felt pride in wearing these representations of their home culture.

Life status change was found to be very important in the reacculturation process. Andreasen (1984) states that for people in metropolitan areas, who are going through a status change, it is an opportunity to rethink and reorganize their lives. Despite Andreasen (1984) findings that life status change shows people changing their brand preference, participants returning to Taiwan did not change their brand preference but continued to prefer the western, casual and comfortable “Gap” style they came to like in the U.S. Participant’s life and age change influenced their own style to adapt to these changes. Findings of this study contradict the theory of life status changes in examining the reacculturation processes. Specifically, the idea of individuals in transition change their brand preference, this study finds that women in transition do not change their brand preference in transition but maintain them.

Cultural value orientation influences behavior and one's place in nature and his/her relationship with others. Thus, consumers evaluate products based on what they perceive as important and value and cultural value orientation is a powerful force to shape consumers' motivations (Tse, et al, 1989). Participants conformed to popular dress in the United States because of their collectivistic cultural value orientation. This could be because collectivists have more differences between attitude and behavior than do individualists, and behavior changes may be adopted because of cultural pressures (Trandis, 1995). Participants adopted the cultural norms of their new ingroup and appreciated individuals in the U.S. taking responsibility for their own actions and were influenced to adopt these more individualistic traits of making their own decisions, and doing what they liked. After living in the U.S. for as little as a year, participants'

value orientation changed to be more individualistic, which, in turn, changed their consumption practices to be more individualistic (Maldonado & Tansuhaj, 1999).

Individualistic consumption practices describe when an individual buys products independent from others and for their own individual interests, goals, and needs (Trandis, 1999). For many participants, there was a blending of both home (collectivistic) and host (individualistic) cultural influences, which manifested itself in a case by case dressing style in which the participant evaluated each situation and dressed in whatever she felt fit. Overall, dress was highly influenced by participant's cultural value orientation whether it was collectivist or individualist.

### **Managerial Implications**

This new study on women reacculturating into a home culture uncovered women transitioning back to their home culture still needed to re-acculturate. This time of reacculturation brings with it a period of uncertainty and in some cases culture shock. This period of destabilization is a good opportunity for companies to create a new market for reacculturating woman. Most women, in this study, found that their cultural value orientation changed to be more individualistic after living in the United States. Western individualist consumption practices were found to be a large influencing factor to women in transition and affected their purchasing decisions once they moved back to a collectivistic culture. Marketing that appeals to this individualistic consumption buying preference would be beneficial. Specifically, strategies addressing the desire to shop alone and to choose clothing that reflected the casual, comfortable and natural styles they adopted in the U.S., and that appeal to the individual making their own decisions about dress and dress that reflected their "own style".

As segregation was not found in this study, women in transition live and work within their home culture and do not try to segregate. Living and shopping environments were found to be huge influencing factors for participants. Living and shopping environments were much more important to reacculturating woman than media influences such as T.V., celebrities, etc. Marketers could use store windows and store location to help reacculturating woman purchase the lifestyle that they are trying to maintain. This “lifestyle shopping” was found to be important to reacculturating woman but more influential was their role.

Role identity was a large determinant in what customers purchased. This study found that women’s roles determined what type of clothing she bought. Students bought student dress; working woman bought work clothing as well as casual clothing. Working women had more dispensable income to purchase career appropriate dress as well as more autonomy in the decisions they made about their dress purchases. They not only bought career appropriate dress but also bought casual dress to wear at home. Marketers could market career appropriate clothing to these reacculturating woman as well as casual dress that appeals to their western dress taste preference at the same location.

### **Limitations**

There were several limitations in this study. First, snowball sampling was used to recruit participants where participants were initially found through the researcher’s previous advisor’s professional contacts in Taiwan. This close relationship with the researcher’s previous advisor could have contributed to a biased sample set who might have altered answers based on this relationship. Additional participants were recruited from participants’ contacts who fit the sample criteria making the participant pool closely related and not diverse.

An in-depth, semi-structured approach was used for the interviews and recorded verbatim. Interviews were primarily conducted individually except for four participants who were interviewed together in sets of two because these participants worked in the same office and insisted on being interviewed together. Interviewing participants together did influence their answers in that one participant would answer a question and the other would agree with her and would not elaborate on their own experience even when prompted. Despite this limitation, participants were still able to answer the majority of questions that produced fairly good detailed insight into their transitions and dress related experience. All participants spoke in English for the interviews with a few speaking in Chinese at various times throughout the interview. Participants' first language was not English, but Chinese, and the excerpts included in the 'Results and Discussion' chapter reflect their English language ability.

Interviews were done in 2007 and interviews were recorded with a computer recording device as well as a tape recorder. Because of when the interviews were done in 2007 and when the interviews were transcribed, between 2007-2013, data may have been distorted. Data were analyzed between 2013-2015. There was a long time lapse between data collection and completion of this project. Also, participants had to reflect back on their time growing up and living in the United States which dated back as early as 1990 and as recent as 2002. Because of how long ago participants lived in the U.S., recall bias related to their memories of experiences could have been altered from the actual happenings.

As the main interview schedule was based on the recollection of styles worn by the participant, an imagery set was developed to jog the participants' memories of what they actually wore. Before asking the dress related questions in the departee and United States sections of the main interview schedule, the researcher showed the participant a set of 20 color photo images

selected from popular magazines, 10 images from US magazines and 10 images from popular Taiwanese magazines, from the appropriate decades. These images were not useful and were discontinued by the researcher because they did not add anything to the interview as the first few participants dismissed the images and did not want to reference the magazine images.

The researcher's role as the primary data collection instrument requires the need to identify personal biases from the beginning of the study. The researcher grew up in a multi-cultural household in the United States, with a mother from Taiwan and father from the United States. From an early age, researcher was exposed to the Chinese culture. Three of my Taiwanese cousins moved to the United States and lived with my family to pursue a high school and college education and have subsequently returned to Taiwan to work. Their life histories have inspired my curiosity to understand the complex transition from home culture to host and back to home again. As a university student, researcher majored in Chinese Studies, where I studied the Chinese language, history, literature, and music. It is possible that researcher's exposure to the Chinese culture as well as my being a young female will inform a better understanding of the lives of the women who will be studied. The researcher also lived in Taiwan for three years after the interviews were conducted further contributing to her understanding of the Taiwanese culture. The researcher's world view and interaction with the participant influenced did influence the data interpretation despite striving to explore through the participant's experience (Willig, 2008). Because of the limited sample size, sampling approach, researcher's role and exploratory nature of the research, the findings cannot be generalized beyond this study.

## **Future Research**

Future research on the reacculturation of consumer dress practices could focus on women who have more recently studied in the U.S. and returned to Taiwan. These women would have more recent memories of their experience and data would be more relevant to current research. Studies that test the validity of Figure 4, the model of consumer acculturation strategies of returnees, would also be beneficial. For instance, looking at women's roles and its contribution to consumer acculturation outcomes, and if "own style" was a term that individuals used in describing their self-concept. Quantitative studies can be conducted to investigate the relationships among variables and/or different levels of importance of variables in the proposed model and how they contribute to acculturation outcomes. Future research can also compare whether there is a difference between those who stayed in the host culture for a shorter time vs. those who stayed for a longer period. Also, studies that focus on individuals who work in the U.S. and go back to their home culture regularly could be examined and how this group's consumer acculturation varies from those who return to their home culture permanently. Reacculturating consumption behavior research can be studied in any region where women and/or men are returning to their home country to work after studying in the U.S. Comparisons between genders would be an interesting topic for future research as well. Also, an investigation of whether segregation would be possible for individuals going through the processes of acculturation and/or reacculturation would be worth examining in future research.

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## APPENDIX A

### Preliminary Interview Schedule

*May I speak to \_\_\_\_\_? Hello, this is Tracy Zarubin, the masters degree student from Colorado State University. Thank you so much for taking time out of your day to speak with me. As I mentioned in my email I am conducting a research project entitled "Taiwanese returnees' negotiation of roles and identity through dress". In our email correspondence we had scheduled this time for a preliminary interview lasting approximately 30 minutes, is this time still good for you? Great. I will be asking you 8 questions about your dress related experiences from your life in Taiwan before studying in the US, your time in the US, and your life now in Taiwan. I will be tape recording this interview to ensure the information discussed today is accurate. Your name will not be used in any materials and audio tapes will be destroyed at the end of the study. If you do not feel comfortable answering any questions, you do not have to. Do you have any questions for me before we begin? Once again, thank you so much for agreeing to take part in this 30 minute preliminary interview.*

- 1) In terms of your interest in fashion, how would you describe yourself? If not being interested in fashion is a 1 and being highly interested in fashion a 5, where would you rank yourself on this scale?
- 2) Who or what were the greatest influences on your dress and appearance:
  - While you were in Taiwan before leaving for the US?
  - While in the US?
  - Upon returning to Taiwan?
- 3) Taiwan is often described as a Collectivist society where people give priority to the needs of others when it was not advantageous to oneself? Would this describe you now? While in the US? Before leaving for the US?
- 4) What were your perceptions of Western dress before the United States, during and after? How did this perception of Western dress change once you moved to the United States? How? Why?
- 5) Do you feel you have changed by living in the US? If so, can you give an example of a change in relation to your dress and appearance?
- 6) What was the best part about dress and appearance in the United States?
- 7) What is the best part about dress and appearance in Taiwan?
- 8) Today, what do you think your typical dress says about you and your values?

*Thank you again for participating in this preliminary interview. I look forward to meeting you in person and learning more about your dress related experiences. Thank you.*

APPENDIX B

Participant Questionnaire

Participant # \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Time \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for participating in this interview. The information you disclose during this interview as well as in this questionnaire will be completely confidential. I will not use your name anywhere in my research findings. You do not have to respond to questions you do not feel comfortable answering.

A. General Demographic Information

- 1) What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_ Years
- 2) What is your Marital Status? \_\_\_\_\_ If married, what year did you get married? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Do you have children? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, how many children and their ages? \_\_\_\_\_

B. Information from your childhood in **Taiwan**

- 1) Where is your birthplace? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Where did you live growing up? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) What was your family economic background? (*Please circle below*)  
Wealthy    Upper Middle Class    Middle    Lower Middle Class    Lower Class
- 4) What language did you speak most at home? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Where did you live prior to moving to the United States? \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) What were you doing immediately before coming to the United States? \_\_\_\_\_

C. Information from your time in the **United States**

- 1) How old were you when you arrived in the US? \_\_\_\_\_ What year was it? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Where did you attend university? \_\_\_\_\_

- 3) What degree(s) did you earn? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) How many years did you live in the U.S.? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Where did you live, (i.e. an apartment, house)? \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) Did you live with US friends, Taiwanese friends, relatives, alone, etc.? \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) If you lived with Taiwanese friends and/or relatives, did you speak Chinese at home? \_\_\_\_\_

D. Information from when you returned to **Taiwan**

- 1) What year did you return to Taiwan? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Where do you live now? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) What is your occupation? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) What language do you speak at home now? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) How many times have you visited the US since you have been back to Taiwan? \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C

### Main Interview Schedule

*Thank you for coming here today to help me with my research project. As I introduced myself in my emails, I am a Masters student in the department of Design and Merchandising at Colorado State University and am working on my thesis. The topic of my research is to describe the process of consumer acculturation by which Taiwanese women have negotiated their roles and identity through consumption practices related to dress.*

*Before we begin with the interview, please read this consent form. It might look familiar, because when we were first corresponding I had emailed a copy to you for your own records. If you feel comfortable with what is stated, please initial where the form is highlighted and sign on the last page. The copy you just signed is for your records. Also, if you could sign the same form again for my own records. Thank you.*

*First I would like you to fill out this questionnaire regarding general demographic information, information from your childhood in Taiwan, your time in the United States, and from when you returned to Taipei. Do you mind filling out this questionnaire? Let me know if you have questions. Thank you.*

*With your permission, I will be tape recording this interview to make sure I get an accurate account of what was said today. Could you attach this microphone to your lapel? Thank you. Would you say something so I can test if the recorder is working properly? Thank you. (Rewind tape recorder and play back).*

*Just to let you know, this interview will last approximately one hour and will consist of 3 sets of questions. The first set of questions focuses on your life in Taiwan before studying in the US, the second focuses on your experience in the US, and the final set focuses on your life now in Taiwan. If you do not feel comfortable or do not want to answer any question(s), please feel free to tell me to skip the question. If at any time you would like to leave the interview, please feel free to do so.*

#### **A. Departee Section**

*Thank you for filling out the questionnaire. The first set of questions focuses upon your life in Taiwan before studying in the United States. I would like to begin with some additional background questions.*

#### **Individual Characteristics**

##### **1. Demographic Variables**

- 1) How would you describe your family?

Siblings/birth order:  
 Parents' occupation and education:  
 Values:  
 Religion:

**2. Cultural Value Orientation**

- 9) Taiwan is often described as a Collectivist society where people give priority to the needs of others when it was not advantageous to oneself? Would this describe you before you left for the US? Can you give me an example?
- 10) Were your goals compatible with the goals of your:
  - Family:
  - Friends:
  - People important to you:
 Or were your goals not related to what these people wanted?

**Dress Role Adjustment Agents of Influence**

**1. Family**

- 1) When you were growing up, what did your mother teach you about how to dress? How did she influence you? Please provide detail as related to style, modesty, fit, appropriateness, grooming, and formality?
- 2) What were your family members' responses to your style of dress?

**2. Peers**

- 1) Did you dress like your peers? Why? Why not?
- 2) What were your peers' responses to your style?

**3. Media**

- 1) What were your references for fashion trends and your choices of styles? Magazine, stars in movies or TV programs, celebrities, or something else? Why did you use them as references?

**Dress Related Questions**

*\*\* I brought some pictures from young women's fashion magazine in the 19\_\_'s (fill in with what decade they grew up in high school in Taiwan), (list example of magazine), hoping these would remind you of the styles you wore at that time.*

- 1) Prior to coming to the US, what were your typical clothing, jewelry, make-up, and hairstyle. Provide detail related to clothing style, colors, fit, appropriateness, grooming, formality, and modesty.

	Typical Clothing	Jewelry	Make-up	Hairstyle
Everyday at home				
Special events				
Work				
School				

- 2) At the time just prior to your leaving for the US, what did your typical dress say about you? And your values? What did your style of dress mean to you?
- 3) What was your perception of what was Western dress before you moved to the United States? Could you describe what you thought people wore in the US?
- 4) In terms of your interest in fashion before leaving the US, how would you have described yourself on a scale from 1 to 7? If not being interested in fashion is a 1 and being highly interested in fashion is a 7, where would you rank yourself on this scale?

### **Acculturation Background**

- 1) Was your sense of ethnic and cultural identity important to you?
- 2) In what ways, if any, did you feel accepted by Taiwanese culture? In what ways, if any, did you not feel accepted by Taiwanese culture?

### **B. United States Section**

*This second set of questions focuses on your experience in the US.*

#### **Individual Characteristics**

##### 2. Cultural Value Orientation

- 1) The United States is often described as an Individualist society, where individuals put their needs before others. While you were in the US, did you agree with the individualistic values of your fellow female students?
- 2) While you were in the US, did you continue to give priority to the needs of others (Collectivist value) when it was not advantageous to yourself?

##### 3. Language preference

- 1) Depending how they respond on the questionnaire to whom they lived with... Why did you speak Chinese or English at home? Were you more comfortable speaking Chinese or English?
- 2) When you were in the US, did you ever feel like you had an accent? Did people treat you differently because you spoke with an accent? Can you give me some examples of this?

##### 6. Role definition

- 1) Were you a full time student?
- 2) Did you work while you were going to school? If so, what did you do?
- 3) Did you belong to any clubs on campus or outside campus? If so, what clubs?
- 4) Depending on their answers, ask: How had your life changed being a full time student, working, and being involved in extra activities?

##### 7. Environmental Factors

- 1) How did living with relatives, friends or acquaintances influence your experience in the US?
- 2) How long were you planning on staying in the United States when you first came?
- 3) Did you experience stress of any kind (i.e. financial, school pressures, etc.) when you first arrived in the US? How about before you returned to Taiwan, did you feel the same amount of stress? How did this affect or not affect your experience in the US?

**Dress Related Questions**

*\*\* I brought some pictures from young women’s American fashion magazine in the 19\_\_’s (fill in with what decade they lived in the US), hoping these would remind you of the styles you wore at that time.*

- 1) When you first came to the United States, what were your initial impressions of people’s clothing and dress? Please provide detail for colors, styles, fit and modesty, hairstyles, make-up/grooming, and jewelry.
- 2) Was your prior perception of what was Western dress the same as what you saw Western people wearing?
- 3) When you first came to the United States, what did you wear? Why? Who did you look to for making decisions? Did you experience any conflicts or uncertainties as to what to wear?
- 4) In the US, what were your typical clothing, jewelry, make-up, and hairstyles you wore for different occasions during your college life. Provide detail as appropriate related to clothing style, colors, fit, appropriateness, grooming, formality, and modesty.

	Typical Clothing	Jewelry	Make-up	Hairstyle
Everyday at home				
Special events (Taiwanese)				
Special events (American)				
Work				
School				

- 5) What did your typical dress say about you? And about your values? What did your style of dress mean to you?
- 6) Did you ever change your dress depending on the group you were hanging out with? (i.e. departmental party or Taiwanese cultural events)
- 7) Earlier we discussed the values of your fellow female students, did you convey those same values through your appearance? If not, what values did you convey through your dress?
- 8) How did your clothing preferences change during the time you lived in the US? To what circumstances/events were these changes related (i.e., what influenced you to make those changes)?
- 9) Did you buy clothes by yourself or with somebody else? With whom? Why?
- 10) What were your references for fashion trends for your choices of styles in the United States? Did you reference American, Taiwanese, Japanese, etc. magazines, stars, etc. What type of magazines did you usually read?
- 11) In terms of your interest in fashion in the US, how would you have described yourself on a scale from 1 to 7? If not being interested in fashion is a 1 and being highly interested in fashion is a 7, where would you rank yourself on this scale?

***Dress Role Adjustment agents of influence***

## ***United States influence***

### **2. Peers**

- 1) Did you feel pressure from your American peers to dress a certain way? If so, what circumstances would make you feel this pressure?
- 2) In comparison to your American peers, did you dress like them? Why? Why not?

### **3. Media**

- 1) In the United States, what were your references for fashion trends for your choices of styles in the United States? Did you reference American, Taiwanese, Japanese, etc. magazines, stars, etc. What type of fashion magazines did you usually read?

## **Consumer Acculturation Outcomes**

*I would like you think of your experience in the United States, after 2 years of being there.*

- 1) Did you try to blend into US culture in terms of dress? If so, how did you do it?
- 2) How did you maintain your Taiwanese heritage in terms of dress?
- 3) Did you resist US consumer culture related to dress? If so, how?
- 4) In what ways, if any, did you separate yourself from US culture related to dress?

## **C. Taiwan section**

*This next set of questions is our last set. These questions focus on you experience upon returning to Taiwan.*

## **Individual Characteristics**

### **2. Cultural Value Orientation**

- 1) Why did you decide to return to Taiwan? Did you plan to return? What circumstances brought you back?
- 2) Was this decision influenced by your family, peers or made on your own terms?
- 3) As I mentioned earlier in the interview, Taiwan is often described as a Collectivist society (where individuals put the needs of others before their own), and the US is often described as an Individualist society (where individuals put their own needs before others). Once you returned to Taiwan which culture's values did your own values reflect?
- 4) Depending on their answer to question 3, how did US values, such as individualism, change or not change your own values back in Taiwan?

### **3. Language preference**

- 1) What language are you most comfortable speaking now? What advantageous, if any, have you experienced by being able to speak English fluently?

### **6. Role definition**

- 1) It says in your questionnaire that you are a \_\_\_\_\_. How long have you worked there? How do you like your job?

## **Dress Related Questions**

- 1) When you first came back to Taiwan, what were your initial impressions of people's clothing? Did you like the styles or did you like the styles worn in the US better?
- 2) When you first came back what did you wear? Why? Who did you look to for making decisions? Did you experience any conflicts or uncertainties as to what to wear?
- 3) How has your clothing preferences changed because of living in the US?
- 4) Today what is your typical clothing, jewelry, make-up, and hairstyles you wore for different occasions during your college life. Provide detail related to clothing style, colors, fit, appropriateness, grooming, formality, and modesty.

	Typical Clothing	Jewelry	Make-up	Hairstyle
Everyday at home				
Special events				
Work				
School				

- 5) What does your typical dress say about you? and about your values? What does your style of dress mean to you?
- 6) Did you go through any stages in changing your dress and appearance once you returned to Taiwan? To what circumstances/events were these changes related (i.e., what influenced you to make those changes)?
- 7) Today, do you buy clothes by yourself or with somebody else? With whom? Why?
- 8) In terms of your interest in fashion now, how would you describe yourself on a scale from 1 to 7? If highly interested in fashion is a 7 and not interested in fashion is a 1, where would you rank yourself on this scale?

### ***Dress Role Adjustment agents of influence***

#### 1. Family

- 1) Today, how do your family members respond to your style? Do they notice a difference in your style from when you first returned?

#### 2. Peers

- 1) Do your peers notice a difference in your style? How did they respond to your style?
- 2) How do you want others to see how you dress?
- 3) In comparison to your peers, do you dress like them? Why? Why not?

#### 3. Media

- 1) Today, what are your references for fashion trends for your choices of styles in the United States? Do you reference American, Taiwanese, Japanese, etc. magazines, stars, etc. What type of fashion magazines do you usually read?

### **Consumer Acculturation Outcomes**

*I would like you think of your experience in Taiwan after you had returned for 2 years.*

- 1) Today, are you trying to blend into Taiwanese culture or do you feel completely accepted in relation to dress? If you do not feel accepted what do you do to feel accepted?

- 2) How do you maintain US culture in terms of dress, if at all?
- 3) Do you resist any aspect of Taiwanese dress consumer culture? If so, what do you resist?
- 4) In what ways, if any, do you separate yourself from Taiwanese culture in terms of dress?

**D. Looking back at all three experiences:**

- 1) Comparing the 3 parts of your life (before the US, US and returning to Taiwan) is there a time you felt the most involved in dress?
- 2) What were your perceptions of Western dress before the United States, during and after? How did this perception of Western dress change once you moved to the United States? How? Why?
- 3) Do you feel you have changed by living in the US? If so, can you give an example of a change in relation to your dress?
- 4) What was the best part about dress in the United States?
- 5) What is the best part about dress in Taiwan?

If there is time at the end of the interview, ask these questions:

*We have about 5 minutes till the end of the hour. Could I ask you 2 more questions about your experience traveling back to Taiwan while you were a student in the United States? Thank you.*

***Taiwanese influence***

**1. Family**

- 1) According to the questionnaire you filled out earlier, you visited Taiwan \_\_\_\_\_ times a year. On your trips back to Taiwan did you find yourself dressing differently then when you were in the US? If so, why?
- 2) How did your family members respond to your style? Did they notice a difference in your style?

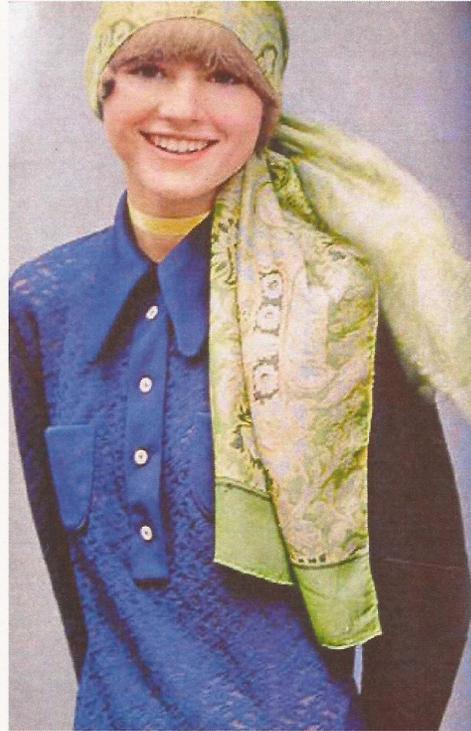
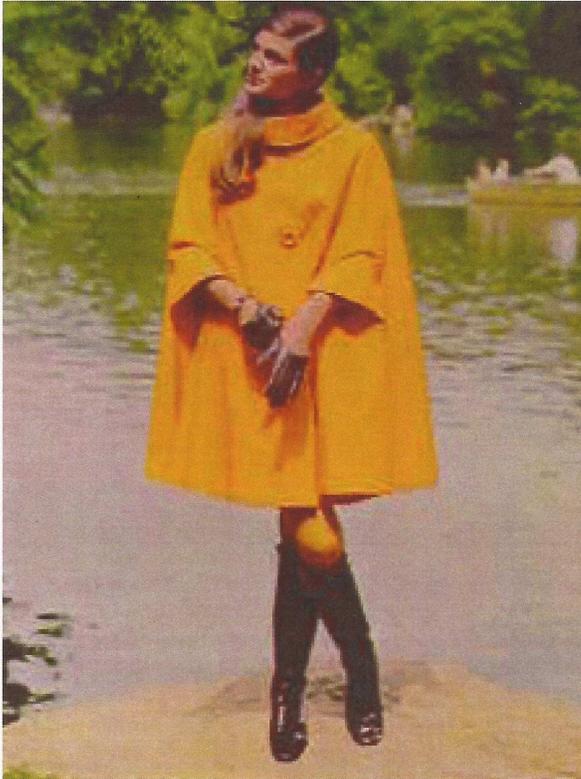
*We are coming to the end of the interview, and I would like to ask if you have anything to add. Is there anything I have forgotten to ask you, or an area of fashion we have not talked about that you would like to share?*

*Thank you very much for your time and willingness to talk to me today. I appreciate your participation in this interview and your comments will be very helpful for my research.*

*As a token of my appreciation this small water bottle is for you. It is a souvenir from Colorado State University. Thanks again.*

APPENDIX D

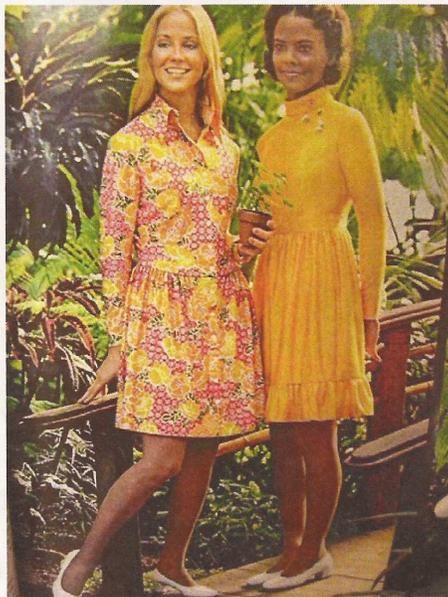
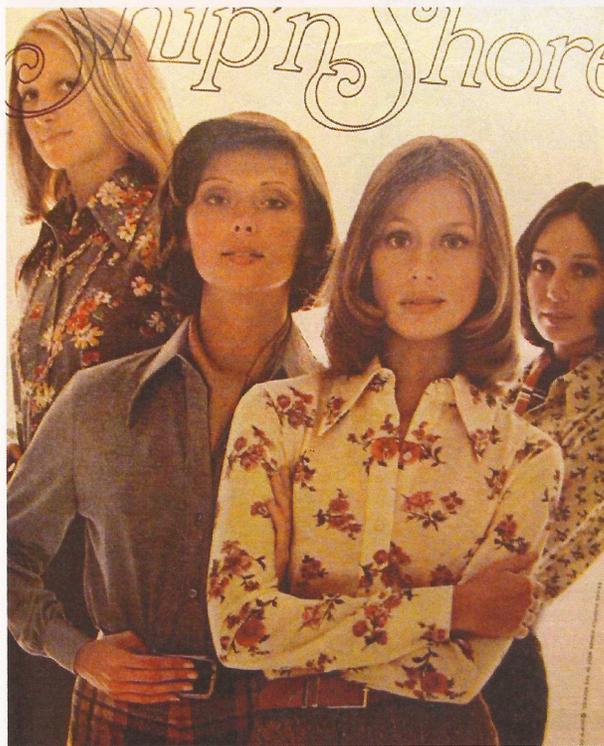
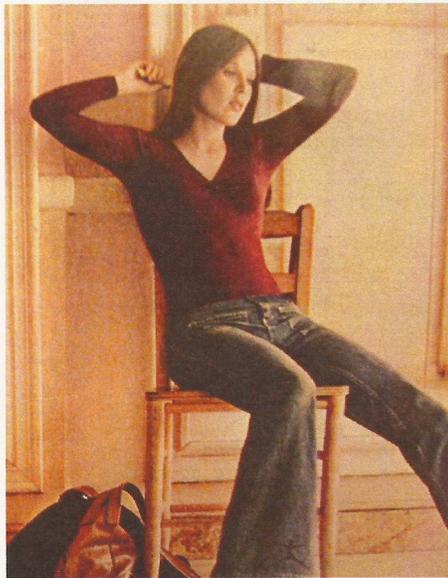
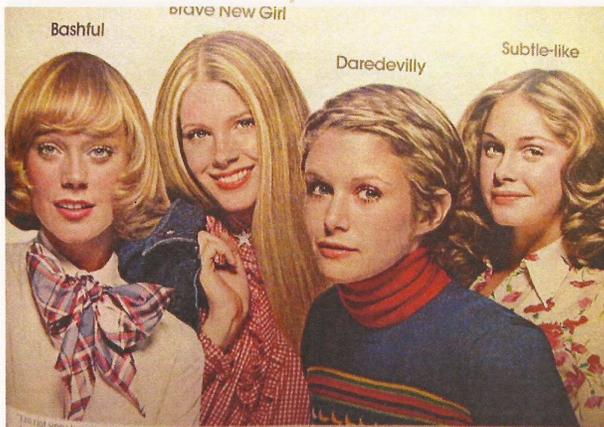
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# 1960's



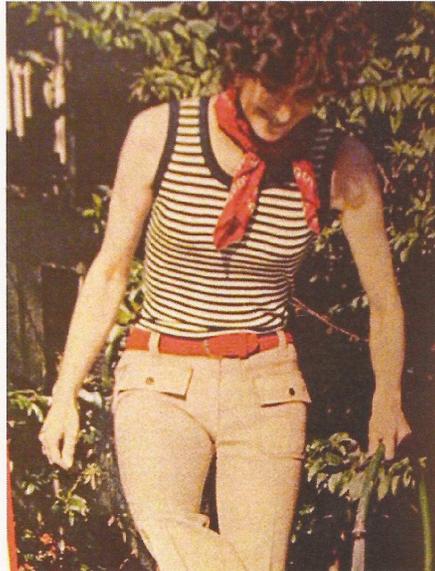
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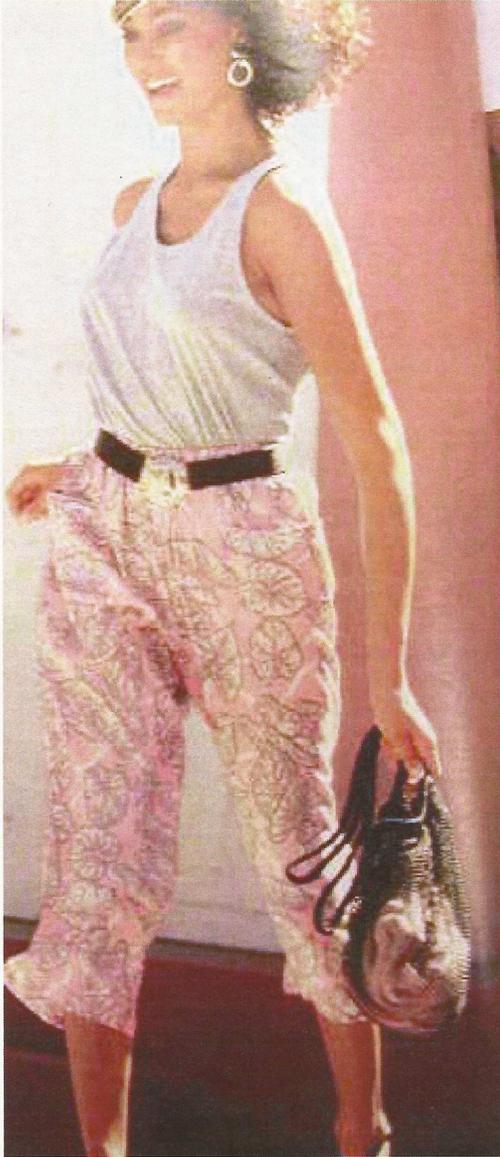
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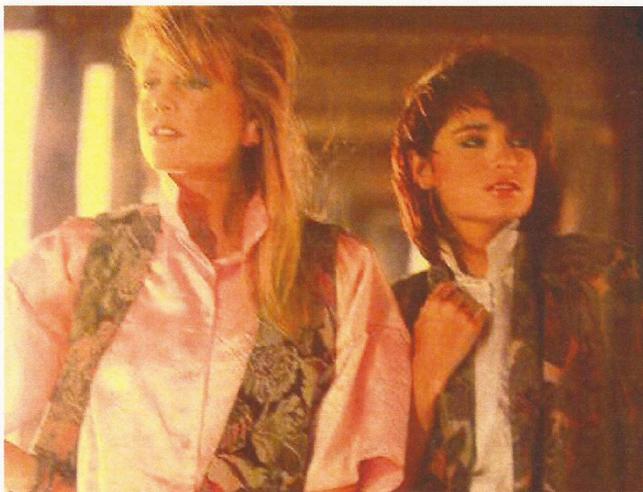
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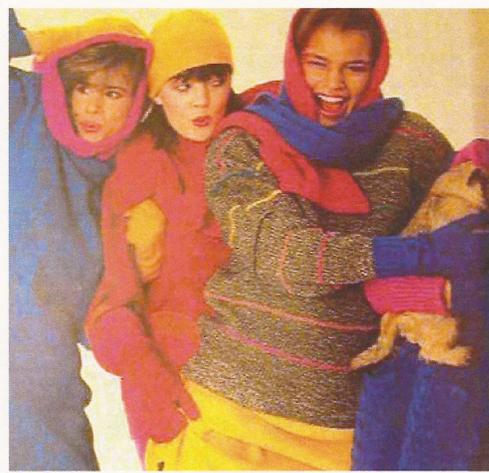
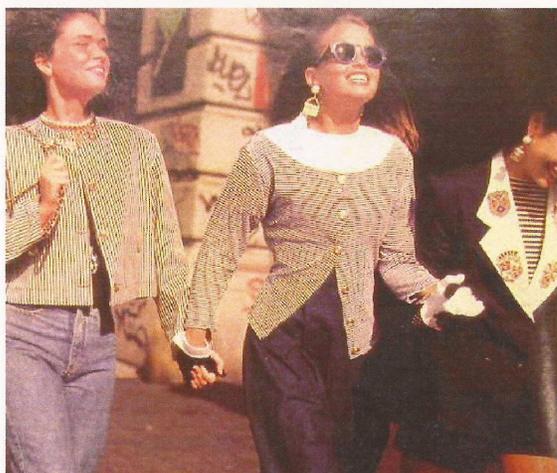
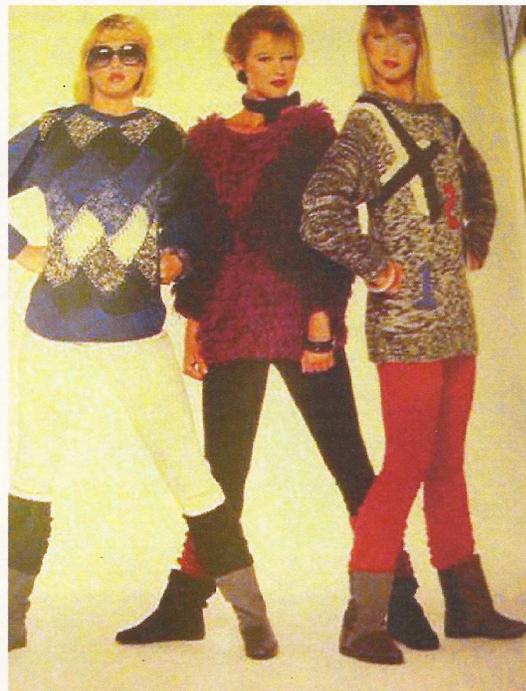
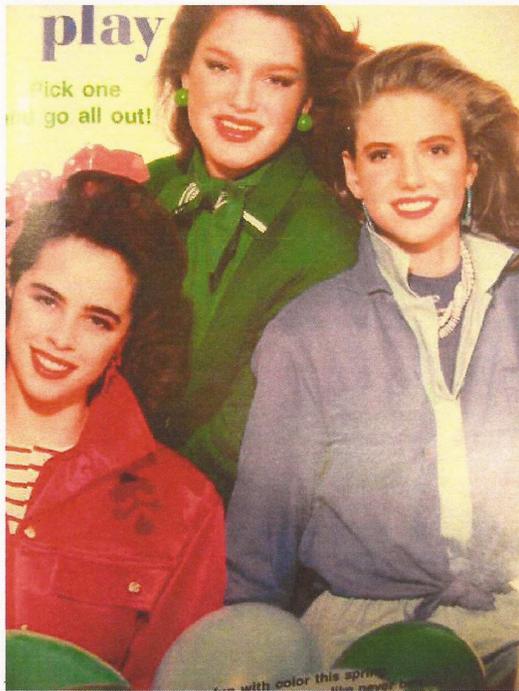
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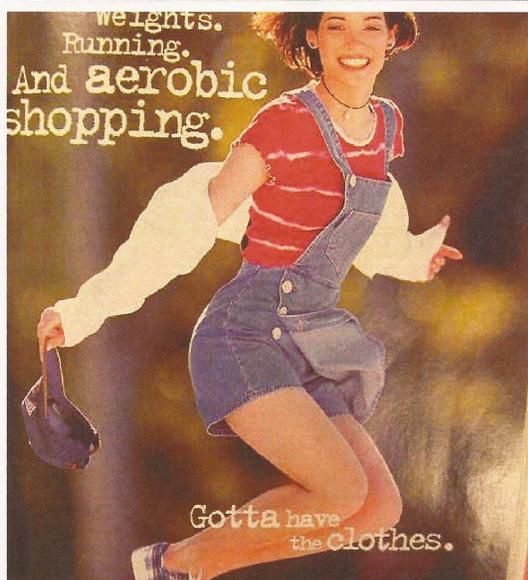
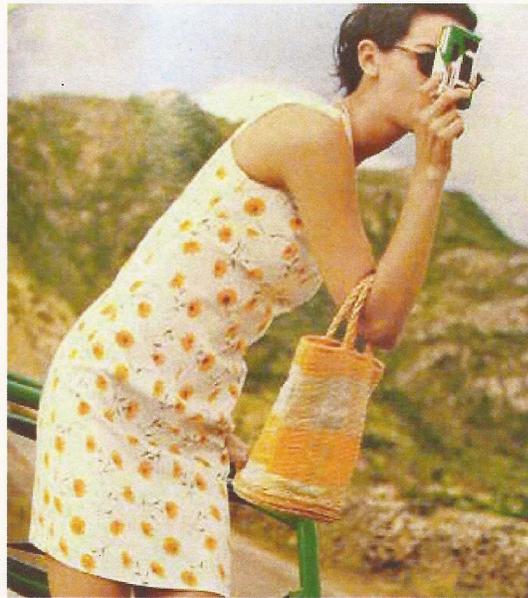
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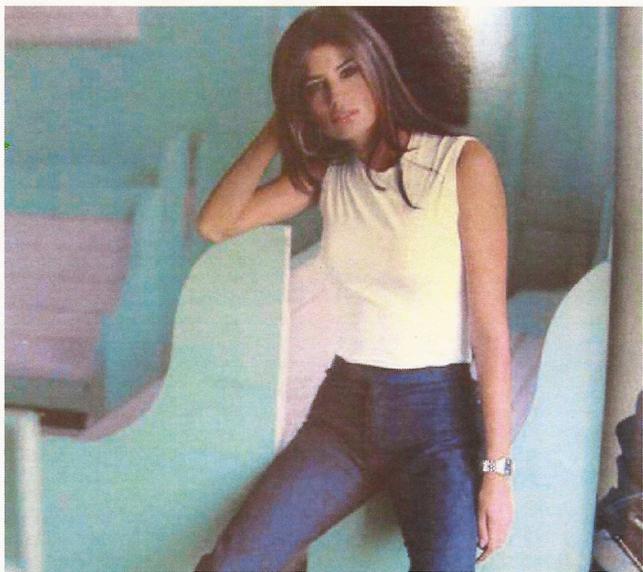
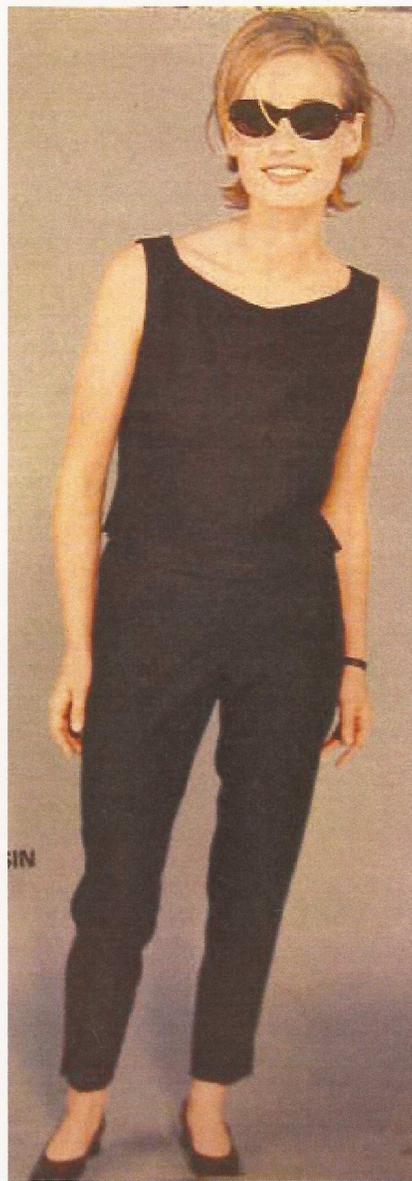
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# 1990's



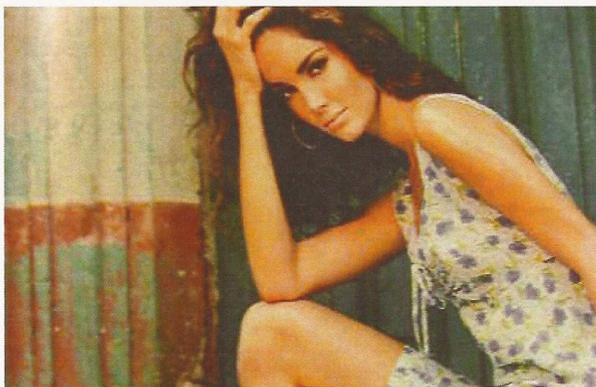
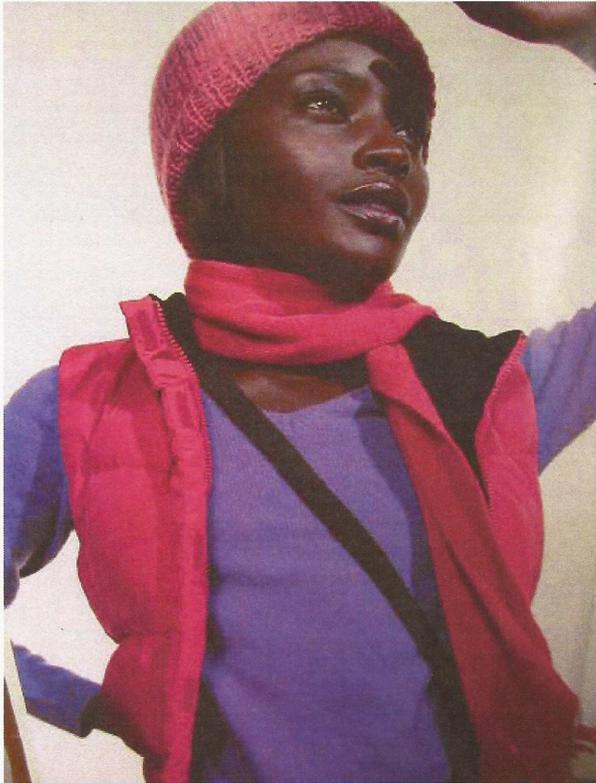
# 1990's



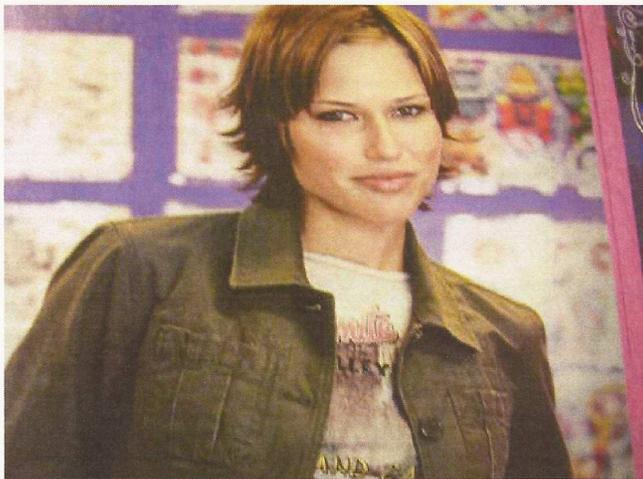
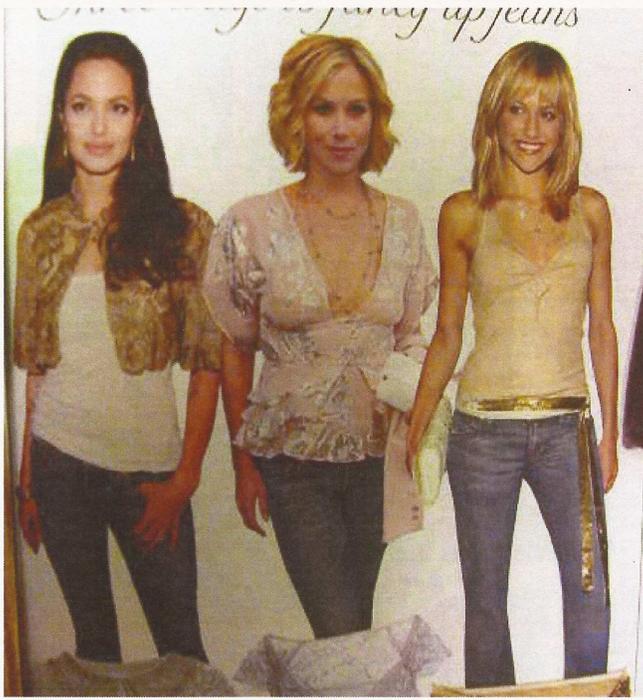
# 1990's



# 2000's



# 2000's



Do  
like Eliza  
Harley and  
wear skin  
Bob Hope  
golf pants

## APPENDIX E

### Pre-notification Letter

Dear [NAME],

Greetings from Colorado State University. My name is Tracy Zarubin and I am contacting you concerning a research project I am conducting.

For my master's thesis project<sup>1</sup>, I am interviewing Chinese females from Taiwan who grew up through their high school years in Taiwan, studied in the United States for their undergraduate or graduate degrees, and returned to Taiwan. I would like to meet with you in Taiwan to learn about your dress related experiences as you moved across cultures. Your participation would be of great help to the development of knowledge on this topic, as Chinese women from Taiwan move across cultures and negotiate their roles and identity through consumption practices related to dress.

By way of introduction, I grew up in a multi-cultural household in the US, with a mother from Taiwan and father from the United States. As a university student I majored in Chinese Studies, where I studied the Chinese language, history, literature, and music. Three of my cousins moved to the US to study and have returned to Taiwan to live. Their lives have inspired my curiosity to understand the complex transition of moving from one culture to another.

I know this is a busy time of the year, but would you be willing to meet with me for about an hour or longer to participate in an interview? In addition to the interview, I will be asking you to fill out a brief questionnaire on demographics to expediate the interview process. If you agree to participate, I will keep all of the information that you share with me confidential and your name will not be associated with any of your responses or in any written work. Quotations will be identified only by a participant number to ensure data will be secure.

If you are interested in participating, please reply with any questions and possible times that you are available to meet between May 22nd to June 15th, 2007. We can arrange to meet at a place of your convenience in Taipei, Taiwan. Also, if you could email the years you studied in the United States, I can begin preparing a set of images to reference during our interview.

If you have questions or concerns about my request, please do not hesitate to reply to this email or call me at 970-492-9571. You may contact Mary Littrell, my advisor, with any questions you may have (email: [mary.littrell@colostate.edu](mailto:mary.littrell@colostate.edu); office: 970-491-5811).

Regards,

Tracy Zarubin  
Masters Degree Student

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## APPENDIX F

### Email to Confirm Meeting Time / Attached Informed Consent / Other Candidates

Dear [NAME],

Thank you so much for replying to my email and especially for being interested in participating in my research project. I am looking forward to meeting you and learning about your dress related experience in Taiwan and the United States.

In your email you give a few days and a place that would work for you to meet. I would like to meet you on (Day, Month, Date) at (Time) at (Location of the participant's choosing). Does this time and place still work for you?

The interview will last approximately 1 hour. At the beginning of the interview I will ask you to sign an informed consent form (this form is attached to this email for your own records), that describes this project in more detail. Next, I will ask you to fill out a questionnaire that asks one word answer questions about your life before the US, during the US, and now in Taiwan. Following, the questionnaire, I will begin asking you the main interview questions. These questions will focus on your experience transitioning from one culture to the next. If at any time you do not feel comfortable answering any questions you are not obligated to do so, you can ask me to skip the question.

If there are colleagues and/or friends of yours that have (a) grown up in Taiwan through their high school years, (b) studied in the United States for a University degree, and (c) returned to Taiwan, that you believe would be willing to be contacted for an interview, please email me their email address. Thank you for your helpful consideration.

Attached is an informed consent form for your records. I will be presenting a copy of this form to be signed at the beginning of the interview.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reply to this email or call me at 970-492-9571. Also, you may contact Mary Littrell, my advisor, with any questions you may have (email: mary.littrell@colostate.edu; office: 970-491-5811).

Regards,

Tracy Zarubin  
Masters Degree Student

## APPENDIX G

### Colorado State University Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Project

**TITLE OF PROJECT:**

Consumer acculturation strategies: Taiwanese returnees' negotiation roles and identity through dress

**NAME OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:**

Mary Littrell, Ph.D., Design and Merchandising

**NAME OF CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:**

Tracy Zarubin, Design & Merchandising

**CONTACT NAME, PHONE NUMBER AND E-MAIL FOR QUESTIONS/PROBLEMS:**

Tracy Zarubin, 970-492-9571, tracyz@lamar.colostate.edu

**PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH:**

The purpose of this study is to describe your process of adapting from one consumer culture to another, specifically concerning your dress and appearance related practices. You will be asked to participate in an interview lasting approximately 1 hour.

**PROCEDURES/METHODS TO BE USED:**

I would like to conduct an interview with you for approximately 1 hour.. Interviews will be audio taped to ensure information collected is accurate, and notes will be taken during the interview.

Please initial here if you will allow me to tape our interview: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No.

You will be asked to complete a one-page questionnaire prior to the interview. Interview cassette tapes will be labeled with a participant number to ensure confidentiality and to keep your data anonymous. At the end of the study, audio tapes will be destroyed.

**RISKS INHERENT IN THE PROCEDURES:**

There are no known risks from the interview process. Although, it is not possible to identify all potential risks in an experimental procedure, the researcher has taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks.

Page 1 of 2 Subject initials \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**BENEFITS:**

There are no known benefits in participating, but we hope you will participate in the first of its kind exploratory research project that will contribute to the study of consumer acculturation. You also might learn how your experience transitioning from one culture to another has affected your consumption patterns related to dress and appearance.

**COMPENSATION:**

A small water bottle from Colorado State University will be given to you at the end of the interview, as a sign of appreciation for participating.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:**

Interviews will be conducted at a location of your choosing, and will be audio taped with your participant number labeled on the cassette tapes to ensure confidentiality. Your name will not be used in any materials or publications. Audio tapes will be destroyed at the end of the study. The data will be kept in secure storage by the researchers.

**LIABILITY:**

The Colorado Governmental Immunity Act determines and may limit Colorado State University's legal responsibility if an injury happens because of this study. Claims against the University must be filed within 180 days of the injury.

Questions about subjects' rights may be directed to Janell Meldrem, Human Research Administrator, at 970-491-1655.

**PARTICIPATION:**

Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Your signature acknowledges that you have read the information stated and willingly sign this consent form. Your signature also acknowledges that you have received, on the date signed, a copy of this document containing 2 pages.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant name (printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Investigator or CO-investigator signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Page 2 of 2 Subject initials \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX H

### Second Email to Confirm Meeting Time

Dear [NAME],

I wanted to confirm our scheduled interview time that is coming up in 2 days. We will be meeting on (Day, Month, Date) at (Time) at (Location of the participant's choosing). Thank you again for taking the time out of your day to meet with me and talk about your experience transitioning from one culture to the next. I am looking forward to meeting you and learning about your experience.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reply to this email or call me at 970-492-9571. Also, you may contact Mary Littrell, my advisor, with any questions you may have (email: [mary.littrell@colostate.edu](mailto:mary.littrell@colostate.edu); office: 970-491-5811).

Regards,

Tracy Zarubin  
Masters Degree Student

## APPENDIX I

### Email to Preliminary Interview Participants

Dear [NAME],

Greetings from Colorado State University. My name is Tracy Zarubin and I am contacting you concerning a research project I am conducting.

For my master's thesis project<sup>2</sup>, I am interviewing Chinese females from Taiwan who grew up through their high school years in Taiwan, studied in the United States for their undergraduate or graduate degrees, and returned to Taiwan. I would like to meet with you in Taiwan to learn about your dress related experiences as you moved across cultures. Your participation would be of great help to the development of knowledge on this topic, as Chinese women from Taiwan move across cultures and negotiate their roles and identity through consumption practices related to dress.

By way of introduction, I grew up in a multi-cultural household in the US, with a mother from Taiwan and father from the United States. As a university student I majored in Chinese Studies, where I studied the Chinese language, history, literature, and music. Three of my cousins moved to the US to study and have returned to Taiwan to live. Their lives have inspired my curiosity to understand the complex transition of moving from one culture to another.

I would like to see if you would be interested in participating in an informal 30 minute telephone interview. This telephone interview would consist of 8 questions about your dress related experiences from your life in Taiwan before studying in the US, your time in the US, and your life now in Taiwan. If you are interested in participating in this telephone interview, could you email me with the date, time and phone number that I could call you at?

If you have questions or concerns about my request, please do not hesitate to reply to this email or call me at 970-492-9571. You may contact Mary Littrell, my advisor, with any questions you may have (email: mary.littrell@colostate.edu; office: 970-491-5811).

Regards,

Tracy Zarubin  
Masters Degree Student

## APPENDIX J

### Preliminary Interview Confirmation

Dear [NAME],

Thank you so much for being willing to participate in a 30 minute informal telephone interview. In your email you say you are available on (Date) at (Time) at this (Telephone number). I am looking forward to speaking with you and will be calling you on (Date) at (Time) at this (Telephone number).

Attached is an informed consent form for your records. If you have any questions, please feel free to reply to this email or call me at 970-492-9571. Also, you may contact Mary Littrell, my advisor, with any questions you may have (email: [mary.littrell@colostate.edu](mailto:mary.littrell@colostate.edu); office: 970-491-5811).

Regards,

Tracy Zarubin  
Masters Degree Student