

**PLACE ATTACHMENT IN RELATIONSHIP TO  
ETHNIC IDENTITY RECONSTRUCTION:  
THE KOREAN ADOPTEE'S FIRST  
VISIT HOME**

**By**

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**PLACE ATTACHMENT IN RELATIONSHIP TO ETHNIC IDENTITY  
RECONSTRUCTION: THE KOREAN ADOPTEE'S FIRST VISIT HOME**

**Abstract**

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Place attachment research in academic and professional venues suggest that people's place attachment experiences inform a positive identity and enhance psychological well-being. From these emotional attachments, identity and dependence to a place augment the experience. In addition, place attachment to one's birth country implies an ethnic identity. Specifically this paper examines the relationship between place attachment and ethnic identity among adult Korean adoptees after their first trip back to their birth country. The specific cohort are Korean adoptees who were previously displaced from their birth country at a very young age. Surveyed individuals self reported place attachment experiences in relationship to natural, urban and cultural environments. Their recorded experiences suggest ways architects and interior designers may minimize the sense of ethnic separation and support ethnic identity reconstruction.

Research for this paper was collected via an online survey. There were 451 participants from 11 countries. The survey consisted of 9 sections and 29 questions. Questions explored demographics, information regarding the adoptee's formative years and family characteristics, the first visit expectation and experience, and urban and natural places visited. Efforts were made to identify their most memorable locations visited and those location's most memorable characteristics. The following sections explored place attachment experiences which were defined by place identity and place dependence frameworks. Finally, survey results did indicate how the trip contributed to the ethnic identity reconstruction for the adoptee.

Adoptee self-documentation literature review and preliminary survey findings support the importance and meaning of specific memorable locations and cultural characteristics.

Preliminary interpretation also supports a reciprocal relationship between place attachment experiences and the adult adoptee's ethnic identity reconstruction. From preliminary review, the adult adoptee's experience guide future research in designing for the displaced Korean adoptee child. Perhaps an example for incorporation into the young adoptee's living environment might be characteristics from the temples and palaces, such as vibrant colors, patterns, unique building materials and complexity. These qualities may enhance a Korean ethnic association for the young adoptee and from this ethnic identification, the young adoptee may feel proud and a sense of belonging to their previous culture, now thousands of miles away.

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## **Dedication**

Through an evolution of more than fifty years, the Korean adoptee experiences represent a collection of puzzle pieces; each adoptee searches to find connection and meaning to complete their puzzle of life. “Two of the central questions most adoptees ask are ‘who am I’ and ‘where do I come from?’”(Meier, 1998, p. 27).

This thesis is dedicated to all of the displaced intercountry interracial adoptees all over the world. May you each find the missing pieces to your puzzle of life and find fulfillment in all that you do.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Architecture as Place**

Architecture is made by use and by design (Hill, 1996) where architecture creates places which satisfy biological needs, reflect cultural values and norms, and enhance psychological effects through a humanistic and holistic approach (Faulkner, Nissen, Faulkner, S., 1986). Architecture provides psychological sanctuary; it is a guardian of identity (de Botton, 2006). The environment around us, the landscape, the buildings, our homes, our personal spaces enhances or hinders our physical and psychological well-being. “To speak of home in relationship to a building is simply to recognize its harmony with our own prized internal song... We need a home in the psychological sense as much as we need one in the physical: to compensate for vulnerability” (de Botton, 2006, p.107). The field of architecture is challenged to create spaces for physical as well as psychological well-being. Places often evoke emotional feelings and experiences which create an attachment. Attachment refers to affect while place is the environmental setting. Place is space that has been given meaning through personal, group, or cultural processes (Low & Altman, 1992). Architectural research supports knowledge gained from attachment experiences to design spaces that support an attachment and thus well-being.

Beings surround themselves with the places they find themselves, the way one wraps oneself up in a garment that is at one and the same time a disguise and a characterization. Without places, beings would be abstractions. It is places that make their image precise and that give them the necessary support thanks to which we can assign them a place in our mental place, dream of them and remember them (Poulet, 1977, p. 26).

Place attachment refers to the emotional connection formed by an individual to a physical location (Altman & Low, 1992) or “a positive connection or bond between a person and a particular place” (Giuliani & Feldman, 1993 as cited in Williams & Vaske, 2003, p. 830). Attachment to a place can evoke a range of thoughts, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors as well as feelings. “Thus people become attached to places, as places satisfy people’s emotional needs” (Kaiser & Fuhrer, 1997, p.230).

Similarly, ethnic identity is “generally viewed as a multidimensional construct that includes feelings of ethnic belonging and pride, a secure sense of group membership, and positive attitudes toward one’s ethnic group” (Erikson, 1959 as cited in Bergquist, 2000, p.4).

Previous literature presents two ways in which place has been related to identity, specifically social identification and place identification (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). “Social identification is defined as: ‘identity contingent self-descriptions deriving from membership in social categories (nationality, sex, race, occupation, sports teams...)’” (Hogg & Abrams, 1988 as cited in Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996, p. 206). “Place identification would express membership of a group of people who are defined by a location” (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996, p. 206). Places offer rich possibilities for identification (Norberg-Schultz, 1985).

The place, therefore, unites a group of human beings, it is something which gives them a common identity and hence is a basis for a fellowship or society. When we identify with a place, we dedicate ourselves to a way of being in the world (Norberg-Schultz, 1985, p.9).

If ethnic identity is belonging to and having pride in an ethnic group, then by extension, place identity may include an ethnic identity based on an individual’s ethnic location of origin or one’s birth country. An examination of the relationship between place attachment and ethnic identity reconstruction is the focus of this paper.

Specifically, this paper examines the relationship between place attachment and ethnic identity among Korean adoptees displaced from their birth country at a very young age; where place attachment experiences in relationship to natural features and environments, and urban and cultural environments may support ethnic identity reconstruction. From the adoptee's return visit to birth place environments, what characteristics are most memorable? From this experience of place, what is the implication toward ethnic identity formation? And most importantly, in retrospect of Korean adoptee first return visit experiences, what specific identifiable place attachment memories provide new knowledge for the architect and in addition, for the adoptive parent to incorporate into the living space of their displaced child? The home represents an extension of who we are; the home should provide a haven for what is important to us, a place of comfort, a sanctuary away from distress, a place which influences who we can be and a reminder of our full potential (de Botton, 2006). The home space of the displaced Korean adoptee child should reflect their ethnic identity and provide a safe place to protect their vulnerability from the outside world.

### **Adoptee First Visit Home as Place**

Adult Korean adoptees often report an emotional experience their first return visit to Korea. From this visit, adoptees experience a heightened sense of pride and connection to a people and country, until their return visit was entirely foreign and unknown. In personal accounts, adoptees note that their first visit back to Korea left them feeling at home, being where they belong, finding out what it means to be Korean, finally feeling like a person with a history and a part of a culture, a connection with Korea's past, a sense of pride in being

Korean; the experience of visiting Korea holds special meaning to each adoptee (Kim, 2008; Nelson & Kim, 2007; K.O. Kim, 2007; Bishop & Rankin, 1997). Each experience is unique.

The following poem was written by an adult adoptee for a contest where adoptees were requested to write of their experiences during their visit to Korea.

### The Journey

The plane touched down in the “Land of the Morning Calm”  
With anticipation the young lady left the plane feeling anything, but calm  
The sights and smells powerful her head was reeling from all of this  
The people looked like her, is this possible, could it be, what place was this  
Everywhere she went she felt that she belonged, but how could this be  
For she could not remember visiting this place before  
Young lady this is the place of your birth, this is your motherland  
You see it was 21 years ago that you left, you have been here before  
A peaceful calm came over her for she knew she had come home  
To the place where her life had started, just 21 years ago.

(Getman, 2007, p. 209)

Interest for this research thesis originates from adult Korean adoptees’ struggle to construct an ethnic identity and report memorable experiences as a result of first return visits to Korea. What is the experience and what is the relationship to the adoptees’ ethnic identity reconstruction? What can we learn from these adult experiences to create personal spaces for the displaced Korean adoptee child?

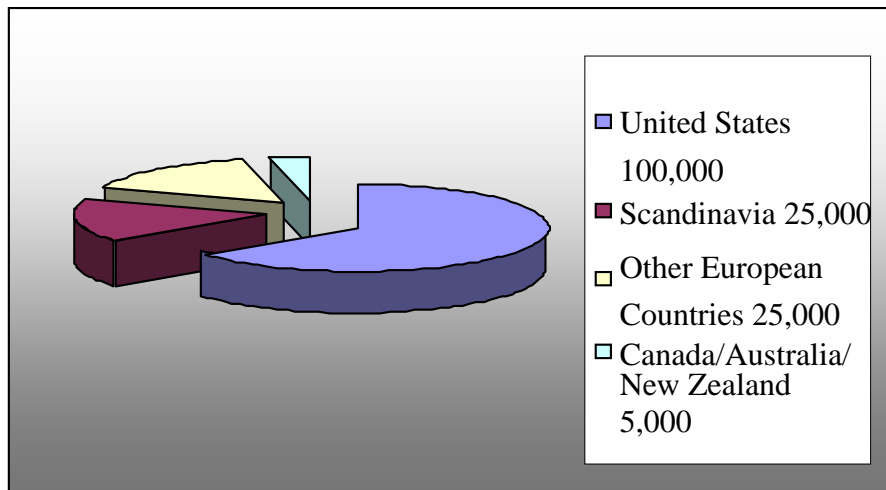
### **Historical Review of Korean Adoption**

International adoption in Korea began as a result of the devastation caused by the war between North and South Korea; a war which began in 1950 and ended in 1953 with a signed armistice agreement. The losses to Korean families were exorbitant with two million lives lost or wounded and over ten million families displaced. Kim (2006) describes the Korean War’s



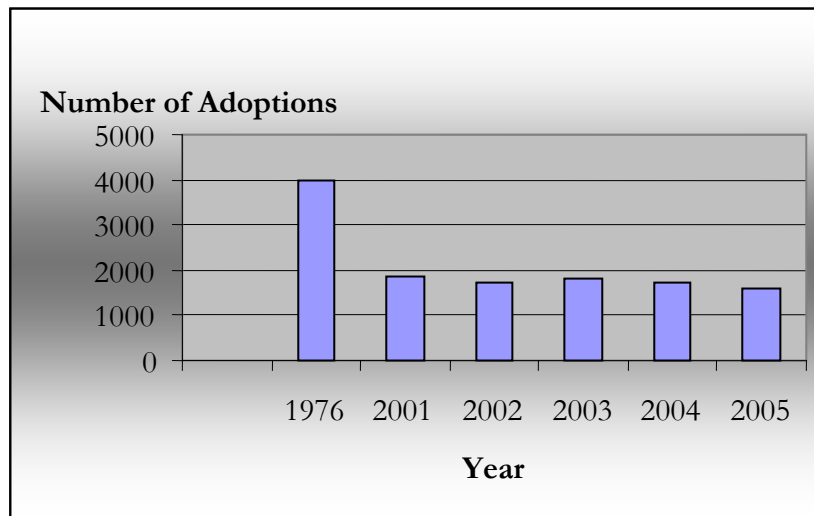
aftermath of desolation and devastation. Thousands of war orphans searched for food and shelter and were barely able to survive, especially in Korea's harsh winters. While there were already processes in place to provide monthly support through sponsorship for some of the orphaned children, this only perpetuated the problem of children without a family of their own.

Almost a year and a half after the armistice was signed, there were over 80,000 war orphans in 800 orphanages throughout South Korea (Kim, 2006). From 1953 to 2001, approximately 200,000 Korean children (predominately under one year old) were sent to families to be raised in the Western world. Statistics from the Korean Ministry of Health and Welfare report over 100,000 were sent to the United States, 50,000 to Europe, 5,000 to Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and the remaining 50,000 to other countries including Korea. Table 1.1, shows the major distribution of Korean babies (predominately under one year of age) to western countries.



**Figure 1.1**  
**Number of adopted Koreans by country to principal host countries, from 1953-2001**  
Source: Korean Ministry of Health and Welfare 2002

While Korean inter-country adoptions continue to decline, Korea’s goal to eliminate all inter-country adoption, except mixed race and children with disabilities by 1995, has not been achieved. (EBD, 1999). Table 1.2 summarizes adoptions to the United States from 1976 to 2005. Intercountry adoptions have declined substantially, by over half, and continue to decline.



**Figure 1.2**  
**Korean Adoptions to the United States**  
Source: Korean Ministry of Health and Welfare (2002)  
Evan B. Donaldson (2008)

The history of Korean intercountry adoption is declining, especially as the Korean government continues to enact policy in support of incountry adoption. From the report by the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute (1999), “...the lessons that can be learned from Korean adoptees – the largest contingency of international adoptees – provide critical guidance to the field of international adoption” (p. 7).

Korea is no longer the leading country sending adoptees to the United States or other Western nations. “International attention during the Seoul Olympics in 1988 exposed a deep

sense of national shame for continuing to send unwanted children away. “Since the 1990s, South Korea’s economic growth—it is now the world’s sixteenth largest economy—has also contributed to a decrease in the number of adoptees South Korea is willing to send out of the country, and it appears likely that South Korean transnational adoption will end completely in the near future” (Kim, 2009, p. 17). While Korea intercountry interracial adoption may end, other less fortunate countries unable to provide for their abandoned children will continue to provide for American demand of adoptable children.

“While Korean adoptees are not the only transracial adoptees, they are currently the largest group of adult transracial adoptees, and the only group of transracial adoptees in America who have self organized into networking and political advocacy groups based solely on their shared identities as adoptees. Thus, Korean adoptees are in a position to advocate for other transracial adoptees, as well as for generations to come. In 20 years, Chinese American adoptees will likely constitute the largest population of adult transracial adoptees...” (Kim, 2009, p. 17).

As Korean adoptees come into adulthood, research interests move from interest in only adoptee parental views to experiences of the adoptee. There is new emphasis on “social, psychological, political, and cultural consequences of Korean adoption than ever before” (Kim, 2009, p. 15). The adoptee life experience opens the door to new areas in sociocultural inquiry and for this paper, how do these experiences inform future place attachment design research?

### **Statement of the Problem**

Korean adoptees report living in a world where they do not truly fit in; they are outsiders constantly reminded that they are different from their adopted family and community. Meier (1998) comments from his research, “in exploring identity formation in

adult adoptees, I found that true *acceptance*--deeply felt and believed--was present in only a few of the young adults whom I interviewed” (p.2). The process for an intercountry, interracial adoptee to form an optimistic ethnic identity is complex and not easily achieved.

The adoptee’s identity becomes threatened when any thought, feeling, action or experience challenges the individual’s identity (Breakwell, 1983). For example, the adoptee maneuvers through life a part of a middle class, American, Caucasian family. When the adoptee is singled out with negative Asian stereotypical labels, the adoptee is confused and loses a positive image of themselves and experiences diminished self-esteem. “Anything which attacks self-esteem is consequently a serious threat to identity” (Breakwell, 1983, p. 14).

Hubinette posits that ethnic instability of adoptees often leads to “severe psychic violence and physical alienation” (2007, p. 148) and that there is a “high preponderance of suicide rates, mental illness and social problems among international adoptees as reflected in the depressing and worrying results of recent Swedish adoption research” (*Ibid.*).

In previous Korean adoptee research, Meier (1998) strives to make the connection between identity formation and an evolving consciousness of self, nuanced by externalities like place. Meier questions if place matters in the adoptees’ location of residence in ethnic identity reconstruction. This research questions if an attachment to the adoptees’ birth place matters in the adult adoptees’ ethnic identity reconstruction. This research paper strives to verify and elucidate the adult adoptees’ experience and meaning of place in their return to their birth country. From the adult adoptees’ place attachment experience, how can the architect incorporate memorable characteristics from the experience into the displaced adopted child’s living space?

## **Grounded Theory Toward a Hypothesis**

The thesis research's focus on culture and design aims to enrich understanding of a particular socio-cultural phenomenon as related to material culture. A formal hypothesis is intentionally absent from the introduction. The aim of the thesis is to systematically obtain data and analyze it to inform a possible hypothesis or theory to be tested in future research. This research approach is grounded theory (Glaser & Straus, 1977). Instead of submitting a formal hypothesis, three questions inform the research for this thesis: do adult Korean adoptees experience place attachment on their first return visit to Korea, and if so where are these places and what are their meaningful characteristics? How do the first return visit experiences inform the adult adoptees' ethnic identity reconstruction? What locations were visited, and what locations and characteristics were memorable?

## **Significance of the Study**

“Korea now places the fourth-largest number of children with U.S. families for adoption. Typically, infants are relinquished at birth and live with a foster family until they are adopted. Well over 90 percent of babies adopted from Korea are between 4 and 12 months old at the time of adoption” (Tapestry Books, 2008). Adopted as infants, the adoptees have no memory or association to their ethnic country of birth. The baby leaves their country of birth with no memory or attachment to a country which defines who they are in relationship to their physical appearance.

Korean interracial, intercountry adoptees are socialized into the culture of their adoptive families at a very young age. Young adoptees have no memory of their birth country and with very little to no exposure to Korean culture, and experience difficulty forming a

healthy ethnic identity. Previous research suggests that without exposure to Korean culture to formulate an ethnic identity, the adoptee resides in an in-between world (Hubinette, 2007). “Ethnocultural research has also empirically demonstrated that higher levels of racial and ethnic identity are positively correlated with psychological well-being” (Cross, 1971 and Helms, 1994 as cited in Bergquist, 2001).

The value of this research is to establish experiences that promote a positive ethnic identity for the Korean adoptee. If more were known of the experiences and places encountered during the adult adoptees’ first return visit to Korea, and what this experience represents in the adult adoptee’s formation of ethnic identity, from these experiences, a greater understanding of implications of place attachment would be valuable within design research to support the well-being of the displaced child. Korean adoptees are displaced from their birth country at a very young age and experience loss and dislocation. Specific experiences and characteristics of the experiences may be incorporated into the young adoptees’ living space to support the child’s personal ethnic development and concurrently support psychological well-being.

“Research on today’s adult Korean adoptees lays the foundation for future comparative explorations of the issues affecting current and future transracial adoptee populations” (Kim, 2009, p.17).

### **Structure of the Thesis**

The places around us hinders or enhances or physical and psychological well-being. Through place attachment experiences, we identify with and come to depend on places to define who we are. The Korean adoptee, at a very young age is displaced from their birth

country and thus experiences loss of their ethnic identity. All through their life, the adoptee struggles to find connection to a physical appearance which differs from a culture and environment which has become their residence. After growing up in a Western country the adult Korean adoptee reports an emotional and moving experience their first return trip to Korea. From literature review of adoptee self reflection documentation and survey findings, this thesis explores the relationship between place attachment and ethnic identity reconstruction for the adult Korean adoptee and from this experience are there specific characteristics which may inform design decisions in regards to the young adoptee's living space to support ethnic identity reconstruction?

Chapter Two reviews literature of Korean adoptee experiences in search of ethnic identity during their formative years. The young adoptee reports emotional feelings of not belonging and confusion of looking Asian on the outside, but feeling Caucasian on the inside. From this experience the adoptee is not able to make sense of who they really are. Place attachment and ethnic identity literature support and contextualize the adoptee's experiences.

Chapter Three describes the methodology to conduct the research, specifically the research design, the survey instrument and recruitment.

Chapter Four presents the findings of the survey. Tables of participant responses and bar charts convey results graphically for comparison by frequency.

Chapter Five, the final chapter of the thesis, discusses the adult adoptee's ethnic identity reconstruction in relationship to place attachment. From preliminary interpretation, two examples are presented from adult adoptee memorable place characteristics for incorporation into the young adoptee living space in support of ethnic identity reconstruction. Recommendations for future research and the researcher's final thoughts conclude the thesis.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study explores the relationship between ethnic identity and place attachment among displaced Korean adoptees. To more fully consider the relationship, this chapter examines literature from previous studies describing difficulties for the Korean adoptee in constructing an ethnic identity and continues with Korean adoptee self reflection literature from their return visit to Korea. With an understanding of the adult adoptees' conflicted identity and their documented experiences from their first return visit to Korea we review place attachment literature and how attachment or a bond to a place suggests an identity not only to a place but an identity experience for the individual. For the adult Korean adoptee, this identity experience to Korea implies an ethnic identity reconstruction.

#### **The Korean Adoptee Experience: In Search of Ethnic Identity**

Current research regarding intercountry interracial adoption often draws attention to the adoptee's difficulties in formulating a healthy ethnic or racial identity. In the past, adoption research regarding racial identity has been "...conspicuously absent from the literature. It is somewhat like the elephant in the room, everyone knows its there, but they are not sure how to talk about it, or what to do about it." (Bergquist, 2000, p. 2). Korean intercountry interracial adoptees however well they are able to assimilate into the country of adoption, will always be racially and culturally different from their adoptive families (Bergquist, 2000; Meier, 1998; Huh, 2000). Readings from the two books of essays and poetry by Korean adoptees, *I didn't know who I was* (Hong, 2007) and *Seeds from a Silent Tree* (Bishop & Rankin, 1997) adoptees describe feelings of confusion from looking Korean



on the outside, and being a Caucasian sounding person on the inside. Oftentimes the adopted child is harassed, taunted, chased, laughed at, gestured at and called cruel names. Each adoptee story carries a sense of tragedy and separation from a distant homeland and each story is unique and heartfelt; the underlying theme for the adoptee is a feeling of being an outsider in a white world, trying to fit in (Bishop & Rankin, 1997; Kim, 2007) and wondering about a "...mythologized place - often hidden from memory - one's birthplace" (Meier, 1998).

Korean interracial intercountry adoption to Western countries began more than a half a century ago. Through an evolution of more than fifty years, the Korean adoptee experiences represent a collection of puzzle pieces; each adoptee searches to find connection and meaning to complete their puzzle of life. "Two of the central questions most adoptees ask are 'who am I' and 'where do I come from?'" (Meier, 1998, p. 27). The adoptee's search to form their identity is complex and challenging; it is intensified due to lack of physical, biological and ethnic resemblance to their adoptive family. In birth families, it is taken for granted that the child grows up knowing that they look like other family members, and in this situation, the physical identity for the child is obvious. For the interracial intercountry adoptee the physical identity history or connection is often never realized.

To emphasize the unique situation of the Korean adoptee, characterized by complete White identification, different from Korean and Asian immigrants growing up in Western countries, Hubinette (2007, p.153) comments, "...what makes the state of Korean adopteehood so unique is the complete severance of familial ties, cultural routes and social connections to all kinds of Koreanness and Asianness whatsoever. Adoptees live and socialize in a White world but when they look in the mirror, their physical characteristics remind them they do not belong. These daily reminders further emphasize the adoptees' "ethnic instability... and

makes the inhabitation of this hybrid in-between space painful and not very easy to live in” (2007, p.148). Adoptees are constantly torn between their physical characteristics on the outside and their Caucasian adoptive family association defining who they are on the inside.

The consequence of Korean adoptees’ diaspora to predominately Caucasian families with differing cultural and ethnic backgrounds may be reason enough for why many Korean adoptees have difficulty forming sense of ethnic identity. Without a positive sense of ethnic identity, adoptees often exhibit low self-esteem and diminished self-worth and have difficulties feeling accepted in social situations. (Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute [EBD], 1999; Bishop & Rankin, 1997; Kim, 2007) The Asian physiognomy of Korean adoptees emphasizes the fact of an interracial adoption and oftentimes creates a sense of isolation for the adoptee; isolation from not being accepted as Caucasian and isolation from not being accepted as Korean (EBD, 1999). As one adoptee describes her isolation, “...I think it has to do with identifying myself in terms of negations... you’re not white, you’re not Korean and that’s how it always is” (Nelson, 2007).

As Korean adoptees mature, there are phases through which an adoptee progresses from denial to acceptance of their ethnic heritage (Meier, 1998). There are stages of ethnic development during the adoptees’ childhood (Huh, 2000). The timeframes and descriptors of ethnic identity are: Recognizing and rejecting differences (age 4-6), Beginning of ethnic identification (age 7-8), Acceptancing of difference vs. ethnic dissonance (age 9-11), Integrating Korean heritage and American culture (age 12-14); during each stage of development, Huh (2006) attributes desired interest in Korean culture for the child from the parent’s inclination to incorporate Korean cultural activities into the family’s life. While the transition is difficult for the adoptee to come to terms with their ethnic identity, some

adoptees report experiences that develop and strengthen their sense of ethnic identity; one event is their first return visit to Korea.

### **The Korean Adoptee Experience: The First Visit Home**

Korean adoptees often report their first visit to Korea to be a highly emotional experience. They have a heightened sense of pride and connection to a people and a country, that until this first visit, were completely foreign and unknown. From self documentation of experiences while visiting Korea, adoptees report feeling at home, being where they belong, finding out what it means to be Korean, finally feeling like a person with a history and a part of a culture, connecting with Korea's past, a sense of pride in being Korean; the experience of visiting Korea holds special meaning to each adoptee (Kim, 2008; Nelson & Kim, 2007; K.O. Kim, 2007; Bishop & Rankin, 1997). The experience for each adoptee is unique. While not all adoptee experiences are positive for the adoptee, written literature is predominantly positive and richly enlightening. The following writings are from adoptee self reflection literature. Each personal account displays a sense of belonging, feeling at home, not as a misfit, a part of history, a parallel existence with Korea's past, creating an identity, reconciliation and overwhelming emotions for the Korean adoptee.

During a visit to her biological grandmother's house, "This is where I belong!" I thought. I smiled an inner smile. This is where I can call home..." After she meets her birthmother, she comments, "My Danish mother showed me strength, which lived inside me. She (her birthmother) showed me the gift in life, which came from my roots" (Peterson, 2007, p. 94).



**Figure 2.1. Streetscape, Seoul, Korea (Photograph: Deborah Napier)**

Still strolling the streets of Seoul with good friends as company, I felt at home in Seoul, at home in Korea; it did not feel alien at all (Reining, 2007, p.180). (Figure 2.1).



**Figure 2.2. Cheontae Buddhist Temple, Seoul, Korea (Photograph: Deborah Napier)**

They were everywhere: people who looked just like me—with dark hair, warm skin tones, almond shaped eyes, slender body frames and brown eyes (Vassey, 2007, p. 27) No one stared at me as though I was a misfit... I left with tremendous love and respect for my motherland... the cities, the beaches and the temples all taught me the meaning of being Korean (Vassey, 2007, p.30). (Figure 2.2).



**Figure 2.3. Traditional Folk Village, Suncheon, Korea (Photograph: Deborah Napier)**

We stop at Cheju Folk Village...I enjoy the sight of the beautiful thatched roofs of the Folk Village and the sensation of the early summer sun, warming my face. I can almost see the heat from the sun as the dust is slowly whirling up in front of me and I close my eyes and feel drowsy. I enjoy every sip of air that I'm breathing – 'Korean' air. This air holds my past and my ancestors and I feel like a person with a history, like being part of a culture for the first time (Bech, 2007, p.54). (Figure 2.3).



**Figure 2.4. Korean Historic Instruments, Traditional Folk Village, Junjoo, Korea  
(Photograph: Deborah Napier)**

Going to museums in Korea one thing strikes you – the amount of reproductions on display tells you a story of a fragile reconstruction of history and pride. Korea has as many gaps in their past as I have. Korea is trying very hard to reconstruct a myth of a Korea based on very few artifacts, as I try to reconstruct me from three small black and white photos... As I try to mold an identity in the shadow of a culture that is never truly mine, so does Korea try to mold an identity in the shadow of many years of foreign occupation (Gullach, 2007, p.72). (Figure 2.4).



**Figure 2.5. Danish Adoptees, Seoul, Korea (Photograph: Deborah Napier)**

I was no longer a huge, red paint spot on a sheet of newsprint, but instead I was a drop in the ocean, ready to go wherever the current took me. These trips back to my homeland made me realize that when we are born, we are all given an identity – a name, a birth date, etc. But in order to truly understand and be accepted for who we are, we must take in each and every experience, cherish our memories, and create our own identification (Freedman, 2007, p. 130). (Figure 2.5).





**Figure 2.6. Downtown Seoul at Night (Photograph: Deborah Napier)**

I cannot tell you how important it was for me to return to Korea...I went to the street I was left on...It took a few hours for the trauma and shock to sink in. I walked around like a zombie afterwards and into the night... During the night my emotions slowly started to unravel from years of pent up anger and then I started crying uncontrollably... but nothing could take away the pain from the past 30 years...Three and a half years have passed since my first trip to Korea. I am proud to say that I can finally accept who I am and not be ashamed of my yellow skin... I am proud of my heritage and the three cultures that make me who I am (Blichfeldt, 2007, p.194). (Figure 2.6).

It is within the last couple of hours of our trip in Korea. ...I reflect on how profound my experience has been. In mental slideshow I replay the events of the last three weeks...It is as if a part of me has caved in. Suffocation. Emotional overload. I am incapable of expressing anything through words. The tears just flow (Suwalsky, 2007, p.220).

For the Korean adoptee, the first return visit often represents a profound experience. These places are tangible and may be symbolic in meaning and often involve an emotional multi-layered and extremely complex experience. For the Korean adoptee, these individual experiences represent a newfound place attachment to their birth country.

### **Identity and Ethnic Identity**

Personal Construct Theory (PCT), acknowledges individual variation in people's definitions of themselves and others with strong emphasis on emotional experiences as transitions for interpreting the world. Theoretical orientation, or from the view of person-as-scientist, PCT emphasizes individual change (Weinrich, 1983, p. 151). Individuals formulate constructs about the regularities of their lives to make them understandable. "People interpret and reinterpret themselves and their situation (Fransella, 1971, as cited in Weinrich, 1983, p. 151). "One's identity is defined as the totality of one's self-construal, in which how one construes oneself in the present expresses the continuity between how one construes oneself as one was in the past and how one construes oneself as one aspires to be in the future" (Erickson, 1958, 1965; Laing, 1961 as cited in Weinrich, 1983, p. 151). Identity is the process to resynthesize identifications in order to form a coherent identity. For example, the Korean adoptee operates within a framework of multiple identities, some self-imposed and some not. The challenge is for the adoptee to form a logical identity or desired identity. An individual perpetuates a threatened identity where identity is in conflict without resolution and without continuity (Weinrich, 1983). The individual emerges from a threatened identity as the individual demonstrates considerable changes in self-concept (Weinrich, 1983). An individual's ethnic identification contributes in significant ways to identity development.

In his research of social identity and the half-Asian child, Hitch (1983) discusses considerations for when a person's identity comes under threat. There are similarities between Hitch's (*Ibid.*) research and Korean adoptee reported experiences. In some cases the Korean adoptee situation is more extreme and the degree of maladjustment more difficult. "This is the situation where a person is socially assigned to a group, but does not wish to be a member. What is more, the members of that group reject him and would not admit her to membership even if he wished to join. In addition, the group to which she feels she belongs is also denying him membership. She is rejected by both groups and belongs nowhere" (Hitch, 1983, p. 107).

Hitch (1983), continues with attempted solutions to solve social identity problems for the half-Asian child. First of all to lessen social identity conflicts, the individual may alter public opinions of the opposing community. This solution may be accomplished over a long period of time. Secondly, the individual may conceal his origins or by self-delusion, convince himself that he is a part of the opposing community and live within a fantasy world (Hitch, 1983). The third and final solution according to Hitch (1983), is to create group support to raise status where social bonds need not be hidden but open and worthy of respect. In comparison to each solution, Korean adoptees report similar solutions to cope with threatened identities (Meier, 1998; Bergquist, 2000; K.I. Kim, 2008). Hitch (1983), concludes "More understanding of the nature and significance of primary social identity can be gained by finding out how such people come to make their personal existence meaningful" (Hitch, 1983, p.126). Hitch's (1983) research for social identity for the half-Asian child might be viewed in the same respect as research to support ethnic identity for the Korean adoptee.

For this paper, ethnic identity is “generally viewed as a multidimensional construct that includes feelings of ethnic belonging and pride, a secure sense of group membership, and positive attitudes toward one’s ethnic group” (Erikson, 1959 as cited in Bergquist, 2000, p.4).

Previous research suggests that Korean adoptees’ childhood thoughts of Korea were curiosity and the way they coped with loss and displacement was to deny (consciously and unconsciously) any links to Korea (Wilkinson, 1985 as cited in Meier, 1998). It is not until adulthood or once the adoptee moves away from home that thoughts of who they were and where they came from sparked a new interest and curiosity about Korea (Meier, 1998). “But as their identity struggles unfolded and took shape, many adoptees did—on their own timeframe—find themselves signing up for Korean language classes or going to Korea” (Meier, 1998, p. 86). Previous research suggests most Korean interracial intercountry adoptees struggle with their ethnic identity development (Bergquist, 2000; Kim, 2008; Meier, 1998). The purpose of this research is to explore how the adult Korean adoptee reconstructs an ethnic identity to make their personal existence meaningful.

### **Place Attachment**

Place attachment refers to the emotional connection formed by an individual to a physical location (Altman & Low, 1992) or “a positive connection or bond between a person and a particular place” (Giuliani & Feldman, 1993 as cited in Williams & Vaske, 2003, p. 830). A range of thoughts, beliefs, attitudes and behavior as well as feelings are evoked through attachment to place. “Thus people become attached to places, as places satisfy people’s emotional needs” (Kaiser & Fuhrer, 1997, p.230).

Place attachment integrates concepts studied within a variety of disciplines. Scholarly studies include environmental psychology (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996; Knez, 2005; Manzo, 2005; Smaldone & Harris, 2006), behavior and environment (Altman & Low, Eds. 1992), geography (Meier, 1998), forestry (Williams & Vaske, 2003) gerontology (Ponzetti, 2003), and design (Marcus & Francis, Eds., 1998). Within these disciplines, a variety of topics emerge. Twigger-Ross & Uzzell (1996), explores place and identity processes for residents living in the London Docklands where it was hypothesized that attached residents would discuss their relationship with the local environment in a way which supported identity principles. Manzo (2005), explores multiple dimensions of place meaning with an emphasis illuminating negative experiences of place meaning. Knez (2005), examines relations between place, climate and place attachment and place identity to explore the significance of climate in the participant's conceptions of place. Altman & Low (1992), bring together scholars from several disciplines, including anthropology, architecture, family and consumer studies, folklore, gerontology, landscape architecture, marketing, psychology, sociology, social ecology, and urban planning to address aspects, research and conceptual approaches of place attachment within their discipline. Meier (1998), for his dissertation, posits that place matters in the evolving identities of Korean intercountry adoptees in the U.S. and continues with, how does it matter, for his research direction. Specifically, does the adoptee's place of residence effect the adoptee's ethnic identity development. Williams & Vaske (2003), support a psychometric approach to measure place attachment among park visitors for public land management in the United States. Ponzetti (2003), examines the rural elderly and aging in place through the use of visual methodology to understand their meaning of place attachment. Marcus & Francis (1998), propose research-based guidelines for creating usable urban

outdoor spaces in support of well-being for all inhabitants from the business man to the child in daycare. Place attachment research and literature is as diverse as the number of places in each person's spatial environment.

While the concept of place and place attachment are agreed upon terms, there is less agreement on how to define and measure place attachment (Lewicka, 2008). Research conducted by Williams & Vaske (2003) support place attachment, "as a person-place bond or relationship, a valid measure of place attachment should differentiate not only among people with different levels of attachment for a given place, but should also be able to differentiate levels of attachment that a single individual holds for various places" (p.832). Two measures of place attachment are place dependence and place identity. Place dependence is a functional attachment which suggests an ongoing relationship with a particular setting (p.831). Place identity is an emotional attachment and refers to the symbolic importance of a place as a repository for emotions and relationships that give meaning and purpose to life (*Ibid.*). "Place identity has been described as a component of self identity that enhances self esteem, and increases feelings of belonging to one's community" (*Ibid.*).

### **Place Attachment Relationship to Ethnic Identity**

Further research of place identity suggest four processes: place related distinctiveness, place-referent continuity, place related self-esteem and place-related self-efficacy (Knez, 2005; Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). Previous place researchers Knez (2005), Twigger-Ross & Uzzell (1996), Williams & Vaske (2003), Manzo (2005), reference Breakwell's model of place identity as a framework for place attachment and place experience exploration. Using Breakwell's model, this study investigates Korean adoptee first return visit to Korea for place

attachment from place dependence and place identity survey questions. Relationships between place attachment and ethnic identity reconstruction evolve from responses to place attachment questions and ethnic identity questions as a result of the adoptees' first birth country return visit.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Research Design**

The impetus for this study originates from preliminary review of adoptees' self reflection literature. Korean adult adoptees' personal collections of essays and poetry and proceedings of the First International Korean Adoption Studies Research Symposium provide a glimpse into understanding the adoptees' difficulty in finding their sense of ethnic identity. Literature also suggests an underlying theme for the adult adoptee of feeling at home and a sense of belonging while visiting Korea for the first time since their birth. From self-reflection literature, quantitative measurements direct the study to grounded theory of place attachment and ethnic identity concepts. The research design follows two distinct model frameworks for research exploration; place attachment as defined by place identity and place dependence and ethnic identity as defined by feelings of belonging and pride, a sense of group membership and positive attitudes toward one's ethnic group. Within the context of place attachment, specific locations and characteristics of each location are explored to better understand place attachment and from these findings, how to incorporate the findings into architectural design. Within each framework, participants answer a comprehensive list of questions, designed to measure each of the study's concepts.

The study design utilizes a grounded theory approach to gain insight into the relationship between place attachment and ethnic identity among Korean adoptees displaced from their birth country at a very young age. Grounded theory begins with a conceptual theory and requires an iterative process of data collection and analysis which guides the research to further analysis. "In discovering theory, one generates conceptual categories or



their properties from evidence, then the evidence from which the category emerged is used to illustrate the concept” (Glasser & Strauss, 1967, p. 23). Without a pre-conceived theory, the data is allowed to evolve the theory. Through survey responses of Korean adoptee self-reported experiences before their return to their birth country, and after their first visit provide data for comparative analysis; this is the starting point for new insight and enhanced understanding regarding the Korean adoptee experience, specifically place attachment and ethnic identity.

A standardized, online survey questionnaire collects responses to questions designed to gather background demographics of the participants, ethnic identity experiences during their formative years, place related experiences from their first return visit to their homeland and finally ethnic identity reflection after their return. Place attachment and ethnic identity literature define the questions for the survey to explore relationships for place attachment and ethnic identity.

The study utilizes a quantitative approach for grounded theory from descriptive statistics of survey responses. Descriptive statistics represent discovery of regularities or irregularities among participants by comparing results to the same set of questions among each participant or participant group (Zeisel, 2006). For example, for this study descriptive statistics compare frequency responses for place identity and place dependence experiences and the relationship with ethnic identity reconstruction after their first visit to Korea. Responses are also compared between adoptees exposed to Korean items within their home environment to adoptees without Korean ethnic items in their environment during their formative years.

Interpretation of the survey data begins with descriptive statistics to describe demographics of the participants and the basic trends of the study through the use of charts and graphs. Iterative comparisons of the data and the responses highlight similarities and differences among participants and their responses. From comparative analysis, further recommendations for research evolve the data from substantive to formal theory. Comparative analysis can generate two types of theory – substantive and formal (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Substantive theory is developed for a specific area of inquiry, such as Korean adoption. Formal theory is for a conceptual area of inquiry such as place attachment and ethnic identity. From iterative data processing, emergent categories may begin to suggest relationships which may lead to the core of the emerging theory. The purpose of the study is to explore the relationship between place attachment and ethnic identity. “Interest in understanding the attachments that people form with places can be found in a variety of disciplines” (Williams & Vaske, 2003, p.831). Interest in architecture to facilitate ethnic identity is the ultimate objective for this research.

### **Instrument**

The instrument for this study is an online questionnaire survey. The survey provides anonymous responses for quantitative data analysis. The questions are a diverse mix of yes and no choices, Likert scale responses for strongly agree to agree to neutral to disagree and strongly disagree, multiple choice responses, and multiple choice responses to rank the selections from one to five with one as the most memorable choice. Each section is listed in the survey with a categorical heading but is not defined for the participant. The survey was

tested by five participants. Minor changes were made to ensure clear understanding of the questions before it was posted on-line via the internet to gather responses from an automated survey program.

The survey questionnaire consists of nine sections. The first section begins with an informed consent e.g. “If you are comfortable participating in the survey, please select the appropriate answer below” yes or no.

Section two requests demographic data e.g. “What is your age?” Age groups are linked by decade. Participants are asked questions regarding their demographics for comparative differences and similarities within demographic categories.

Section three focuses on the participant’s adoption story, the family environment and childhood formative years between 8 and 14 years of age, specifically their Korean ethnic exposure and identity e.g. “Did you socialize with other Korean ethnic families?” Research suggests that the children at the age of 8 begin to develop their ethnic identity and by age 14 are able to articulate an ethnic pride. At age 12 to 14, “Children can also better articulate their reasons for ethnic pride or their need to learn more about Korean culture. Their desire to learn about Korea now stems more from inner needs and interests than from their parents’ encouragement” (Hugh & Reid, 2000, p. 83).

Section four explores the Korea first visit expectation and experience by beginning the section with whether the adoptee has made the trip back to their birth country e.g. “Have you traveled to Korea?” Using the Likert scale, the next set of questions evaluate adoptee

expectations for the trip e.g. “I expected to find what was missing in my life when I went to Korea.”

Section five delves into Korea visit place locations e.g. “My first trip back to Korea, I visited the following natural, urban and cultural environments...” Participants make their selections from a pre-defined list e.g. “Lake, Sea, Mountains, Public Garden, Sports Facility, Museum...” By allowing the participants to choose which natural and urban and cultural environments they visited, this data provides a better understanding of the extent of their trip. The choices for selection were a diverse mix of locations primarily chosen from adoptee self documentation literature describing experiences from previous visits to Korea (Hong, 2007; Bishop & Rankin, 1997).

Section six explores Korea visit place characteristics e.g. “From the Number 1 ranked most memorable location listed in the previous section, please check which characteristics of this location make this location memorable giving 1 to the most memorable characteristic and 5 to the lesser memorable characteristic.” Participants rank selections from a pre-defined list e.g. “Vibrant Colors, Architecture, Simplicity...” Specific locations and distinct characteristics provide data for potential architecture design considerations for Korean adoptee living spaces. The choices for selection were a diverse mix of characteristics primarily chosen from adoptee self documentation literature describing experiences from previous visits to Korea (Hong, 2007; Bishop & Rankin, 1997) and predominant design characteristics of Korean architecture and interior design (Bongryol, 2005, Iwatate & Kim, 2006).

In section seven and eight participants answer questions related to place attachment. Place identity and place dependence are defined as a measure of place attachment (Williams & Vaske, 2003; Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996; Knez, 2005). Participants answer five questions for each component of place attachment using the Likert scale to explore Korea visit place identity e.g. “Visiting this location in Korea says a lot about who I am.” and Korea visit place dependence e.g. “I get more satisfaction out of visiting Korea than any other location.” From this framework for place attachment, i.e. place identity and place dependence, “Place identity (an emotional attachment) refers to the symbolic importance of a place as a repository for emotions and relationships that give meaning and purpose to life” (Williams & Roggenbuck, 1989; Shamai, 1991; Guiliani & Feldman, 1993 as cited in Williams & Vaske, 2003, p. 831). “Place dependence thus suggests an ongoing relationship with a particular setting” (Williams & Vaske, 2003). Place attachment framework questions explore the adoptees’ first visit experience.

Place attachment has been linked to self identity where “place is considered to be an active part of the construction of a person’s identity...” (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996, p. 207). The Korean adoptees’ self identity is linked very closely to their sense of ethnic identity (Kim, 2008). Section nine concludes with questions related to the adoptees’ Korea visit and ethnic identity e.g. “I feel a sense of pride in my ethnic history because of my trip to Korea”. There are 29 questions designed to explore the adoptees’ story in relationship to formative years ethnic identity and family experience, place identity, place dependence and Korea visit and ethnic identity. The survey was intended to take between 15 to 20 minutes to complete.

## **Recruitment**

The targeted demographic for the survey is adult Korean adoptees, adopted at a very young age with little to no previous Korean culture exposure. The survey is based on convenience or availability sampling. The survey and its focus was widely accepted by adoptee associations and enthusiastically supported. Participants for the survey replied to emails sent from the following list serves: Holt International Adult Adoptee Outreach – Eugene, OR, Korean Identity Development Society – Seattle, WA (KIDS), and Asian Adult Adoptees of Washington – Seattle, WA (AAAW). International support of the survey was led by: International Korea Adoptees Associations (IKAA) which is made up of: Adopted Koreans’ Association (Sweden), Arierang (Netherlands), Forum for Korean Adoptees (Norway), Korea Klubben (Denmark), Racines Coreennes (France), AK Connection (United States), Also-Known-As, Inc. (United States), and Asian Adult Adoptees of Washington (United States). Participation for the survey was also requested and received from Global Overseas Adoptee Link (GOAL) in Seoul, Korea where in December 2008, 44 Korean adoptees traveled to Korea for their first visit back to their homeland. The trip was sponsored by GOAL with the intention of assisting in the adoptees’ birth family search. Formal recruitment from adoptee associations as well as informal word of mouth from adoptee to adoptee extended participation in the survey.

## **Potential Limitations of the Study**

Participants were recruited from Korean adoptee associations and organizations, adoption services, adoptee support groups from numerous locations around the world and adoptee word of mouth. A possible limitation in the data is that Korean adoptees not involved

in formal or informal groups are not represented in the data. While every effort was made to recruit from a diverse mix of Korean adoptee experiences, the results may be lacking in adoptee responses from adoptees not involved in Korean adoptee networks. The participant sample may not be representative of the overall population of Korean adoptees. The willingness and support of the research among formal Korean adoptee organizations may not be reflective of many adoptees who self select not to be included in adoptee organizations.

**CHAPTER FOUR**  
**RESULTS OF THE SURVEY**

**Demographic Data of Survey Participants**

The online survey was open for responses for one month from January 22, 2009 to February 22, 2009. There were 451 participants. The first section begins with an informed consent e.g. “If you are comfortable participating in the survey, please select the appropriate answer below” yes or no. The second section of the survey gathers demographic data for each participant. A summary of demographic responses follows in Figure 4.1. Eighty-two percent of the sample were female and 18 percent were male. Eighty-nine percent of the participants attended college and 68 percent graduated with a degree. Twenty percent of participants have Master’s, Law and Doctorate degrees. Sixty percent of participants’ parents were college graduates.

**Table 4.1**  
**Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 451)\***

Characteristic	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Gender		
Male	75	18
Female	335	82
Age at time of survey (years)		
under 20	14	3
20-29	169	41
30-39	131	32
40-49	70	17
over 50	26	6
Completed a college degree		
Yes	276	68
No	101	25
Not Applicable	31	8

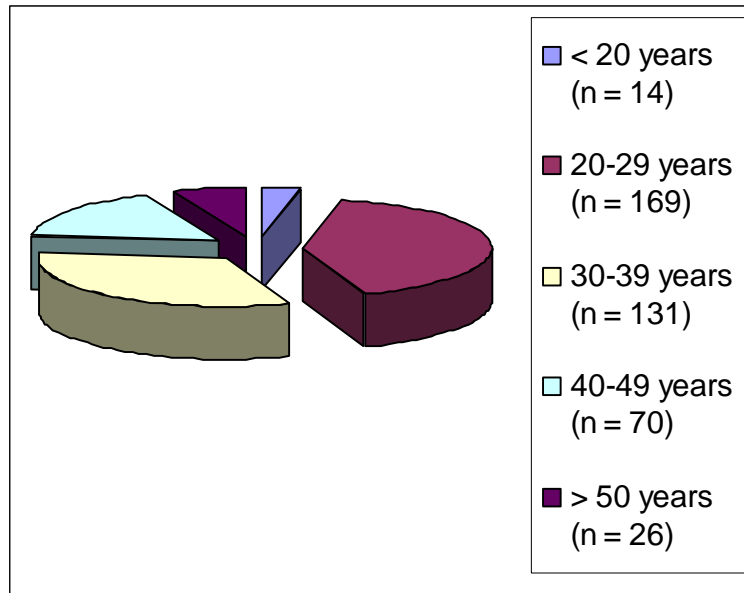


Adoptive parents college graduates		
Yes	244	60
No	152	37
Not Applicable	11	3
Adoptive parents Caucasian		
Yes	387	98
No	10	3
I don't remember	0	0
Age of arrival to adoptive country (years)		
Less than 1	251	63
Between 1 and 3	102	26
Over 3	44	11
In a family with an adopted sibling from Korea		
Yes	186	43
No	203	52
I don't remember	5	1

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\*Note: n may not total to 451 by characteristic due to participant skipped questions

The largest percentage of the participants were between the ages of 20-29 years of age with the smallest percentage under 20 years of age and over 50 years of age (Figure 4.1).

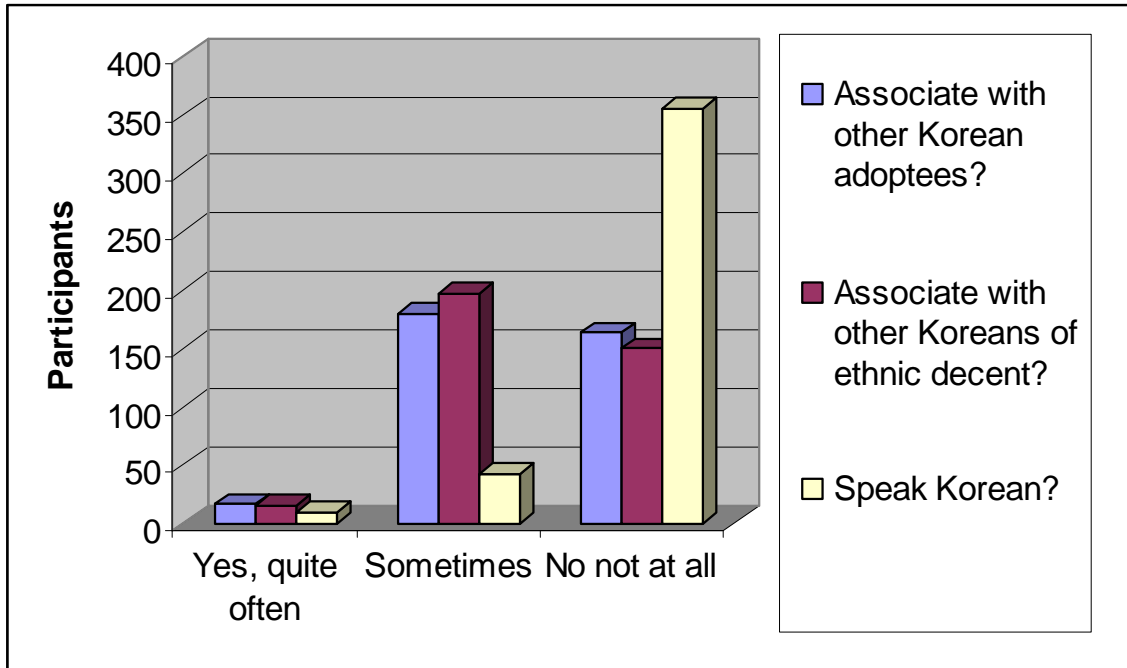


**Figure 4.1 Participant Age Distribution (N = 451)\***

\*Note: n may not total to 451 by characteristic due to participant skipped questions

Participants' countries of residence are the United States, Greece, South Korea, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Japan, Sweden, Antigua, Germany, Guam and the Netherlands.

Eighty-seven percent of participants did not learn to speak Korean, and almost 50 percent of participants sometimes associate with other Korean adoptees and Koreans of ethnic decent (Figure 4.2).



**Figure 4.2. Adult Korean Association (N = 451)\***

\*Note: n may not total to 451 by characteristic due to participant skipped questions

### **Formative Years Korean Ethnic Exposure and Identification**

In response to Korean adoptee self reflection literature regarding little to no exposure to other Korean adoptees or other individuals of Korean descent, questions related to the adoptees' formative years Korean ethnic exposure and identification illuminate the adoptees' Korean ethnic influence.

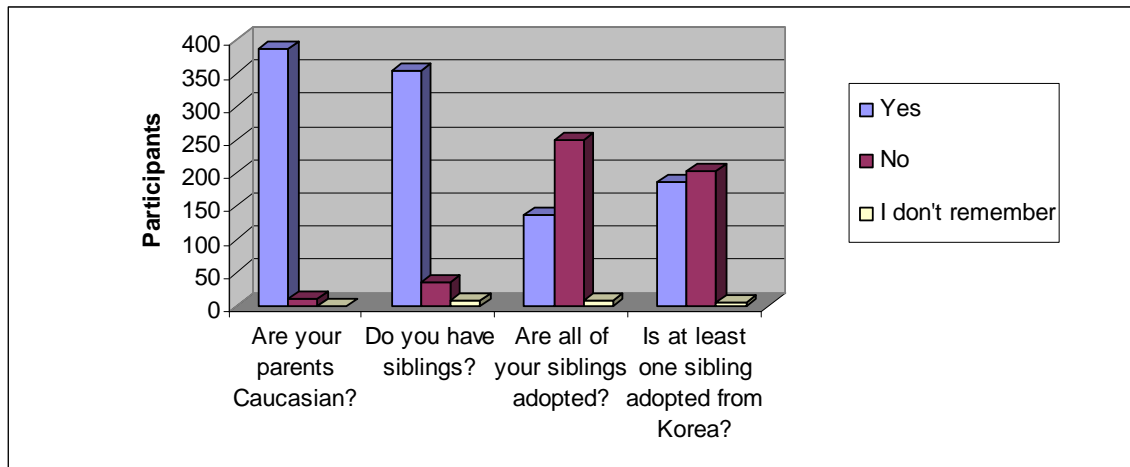
**Table 4.2****Formative Years Korean Ethnic Exposure and Identification (N = 397)**

<b>Survey Question and Response</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Did you or your family associate with other Korean adoptee families?		
Yes	182	46
No	203	51
I don't remember	11	3
Did you or your family associate with other Korean ethnic families?		
Yes	97	24
No	289	73
I don't remember	11	3
Did you attend Korean culture camp?		
Yes	95	24
No	292	74
I don't remember	9	2
Did you grow up with Korean ethnic items in your home?		
Yes	120	30
No	270	68
I don't remember	5	1
Did you participate in any type of Korean lessons or school?		
Yes	52	13
No	341	86
I don't remember	3	1
Did your parents familiarize you with Korean culture? (food, music, dress, etc.)		
Yes	149	38
No	242	61
I don't remember	4	1
Did you view yourself as Korean?		
Yes	179	46
No	208	53
I don't remember	5	1
Did you view yourself as American, Swedish, etc.?		
Yes	280	72
No	102	26
I don't remember	9	2
Did you view yourself as Korean-American, Korean-Swedish, etc.?		
Yes	229	58
No	161	41

I don't remember	7	2
Did you view yourself as 'just a person'?		
Yes	279	71
No	104	27
I don't remember	10	3
Did you view yourself as part of any ethnic group?		
Yes	211	53
No	175	44
I don't remember	9	2

\*Note: n may not total to 397 by characteristic due to participant skipped questions

Ninety-eight percent of participants' parents were Caucasian and 89 percent reported having siblings. Thirty-four percent of participant's siblings were adopted and 47 percent had at least one adopted sibling from Korea (Figure 4.3).

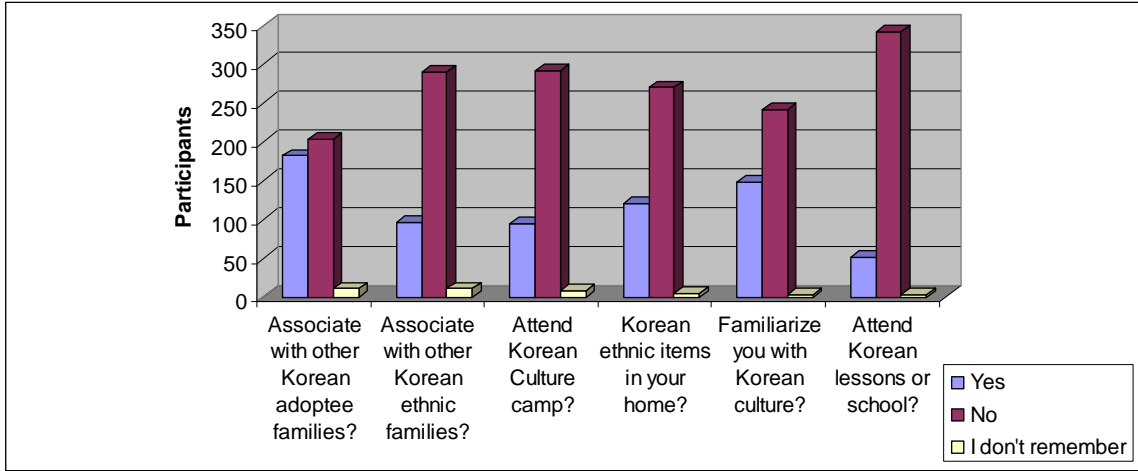


**Figure 4.3. Formative Years (8-14) Family Characteristics (N = 451)\***

\*Note: n may not total to 451 by characteristic due to participant skipped questions

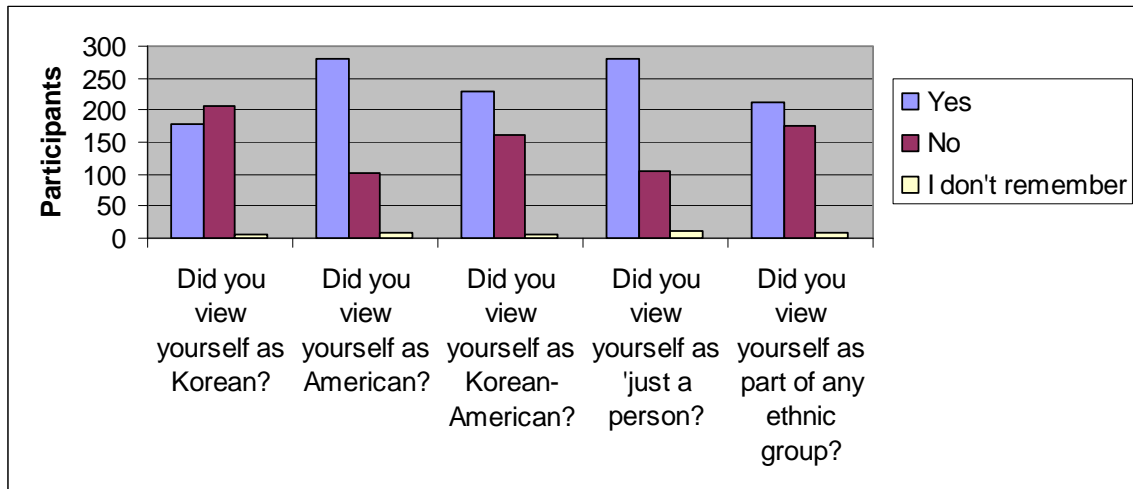
During the Korean adoptees' formative years, 46 percent of participants associated with other Korean adoptee families and 24 percent associated with other Korean ethnic families. Seventy-three percent did not attend Korean culture camp, 68 percent did not grow up with

Korean ethnic items in the home, 61 percent were not familiarized with Korean culture (food, music, dress, etc. and 86 percent did not participate in any type of Korean lessons or school (Figure 4.4).



**Figure 4.4. Formative Years (8-14) Korean Association and Exposure (N = 451)\***  
 \*Note: n may not total to 451 by characteristic due to participant skipped questions

Fifty-three percent viewed themselves as Korean and 72 percent viewed themselves as American or from their country of residence and 58 percent viewed themselves as Korean-American. Seventy-one percent viewed themselves as ‘just a person. Forty four percent did not view themselves as part of any ethnic group (Figure 4.5).



**Figure 4.5 Formative Years (8-14) Ethnic Identification (N = 451)\***

\*Note: n may not total to 451 by characteristic due to participant skipped questions

### First Visit Expectation and Participant Characteristics

Of the 451 survey participants, 152 have traveled back to Korea. Fifty-six percent disagree with the statement that the trip was to find what was missing in their life when they went to Korea.

**Table 4.3**

**First Visit Expectation and Participant Characteristics (N = 360)**

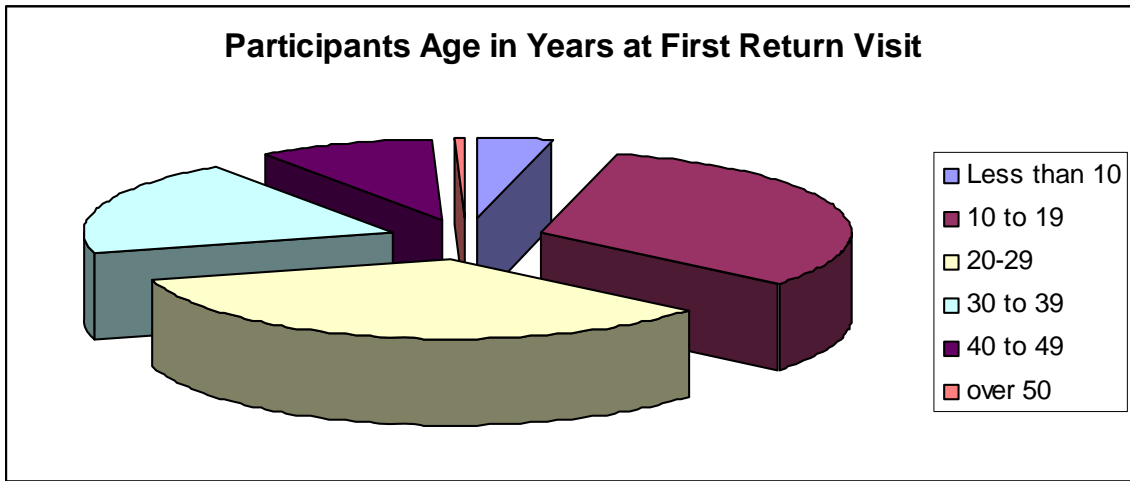
Survey Question and Response	<u>n</u>	%
Have you traveled to Korea?		
Yes	152	42
No	208	58
How old were you when you returned to Korea?*		

Less than 10 years old	6	4
10 - 19 years old	50	32
20 - 29 years old	54	35
30 - 39 years old	30	19
40 - 49 years old	14	9
Over 50 years old	1	1
I went back to Korea as a tourist for a vacation.*		
Strongly Agree or Agree	89	59
Neutral	19	12
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	44	29
My parents decided it would be a good experience for me. *		
Strongly Agree or Agree	71	47
Neutral	33	22
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	48	32
I went on a tour sponsored by my adoption agency. *		
Strongly Agree or Agree	55	36
Neutral	15	10
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	82	54
I expected to find what was missing in my life when I went to Korea. *		
Strongly Agree or Agree	36	24
Neutral	31	20
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	85	56
My experience was extremely emotional and poignant. *		
Strongly Agree or Agree	82	54
Neutral	42	28
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	28	18
My experience was distressing and upsetting. *		
Strongly Agree or Agree	31	21
Neutral	25	16
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	96	63
I want to visit Korea again as soon as possible.*		
Strongly Agree or Agree	98	65
Neutral	36	24
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	18	11

\*Note: N = 152. Filtered responses for "Have you traveled to Korea?" = Yes



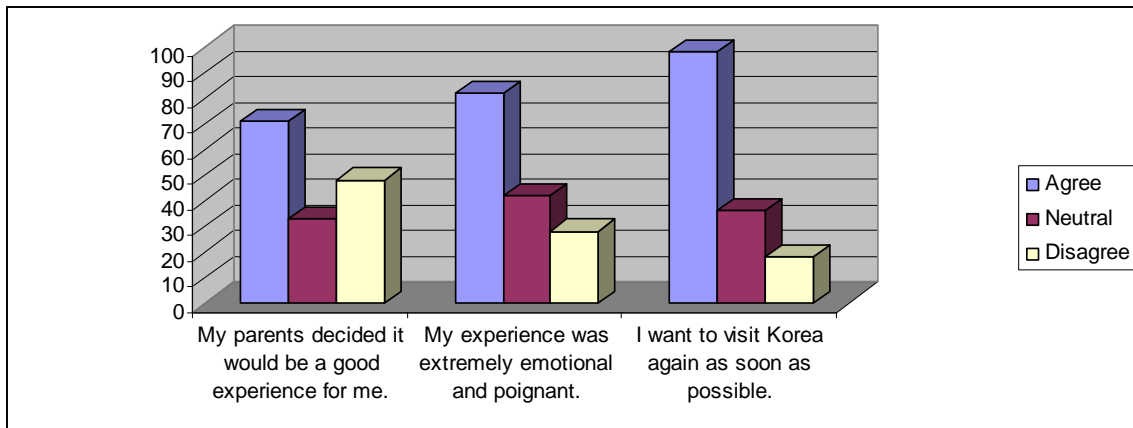
Thirty-five percent were between the ages of 20 to 29 years of age at the time of their first return visit (Figure 4.6).



**Figure 4.6. First Return Visit Age in Years (N = 152)\***

\*Note: n may not total to 152 by characteristic due to participant skipped questions

Fifty-nine percent traveled back to Korea as a tourist for a vacation. Forty seven percent replied that the trip was encouraged by their adoptive parents. Sixty nine percent want to visit Korea again as soon as possible (Figure 4.7).

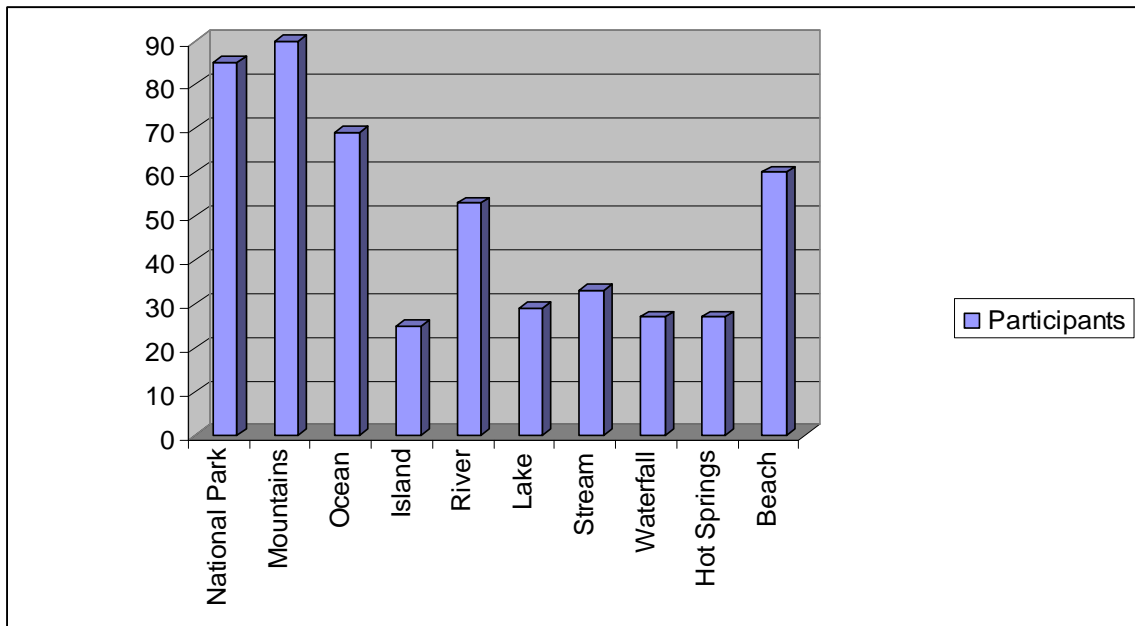


**Figure 4.7 First Visit Experience Responses in Percent (N = 152)\***

\*Note: n may not total to 152 by characteristic due to participant skipped questions

### Memorable Place Locations and Characteristics

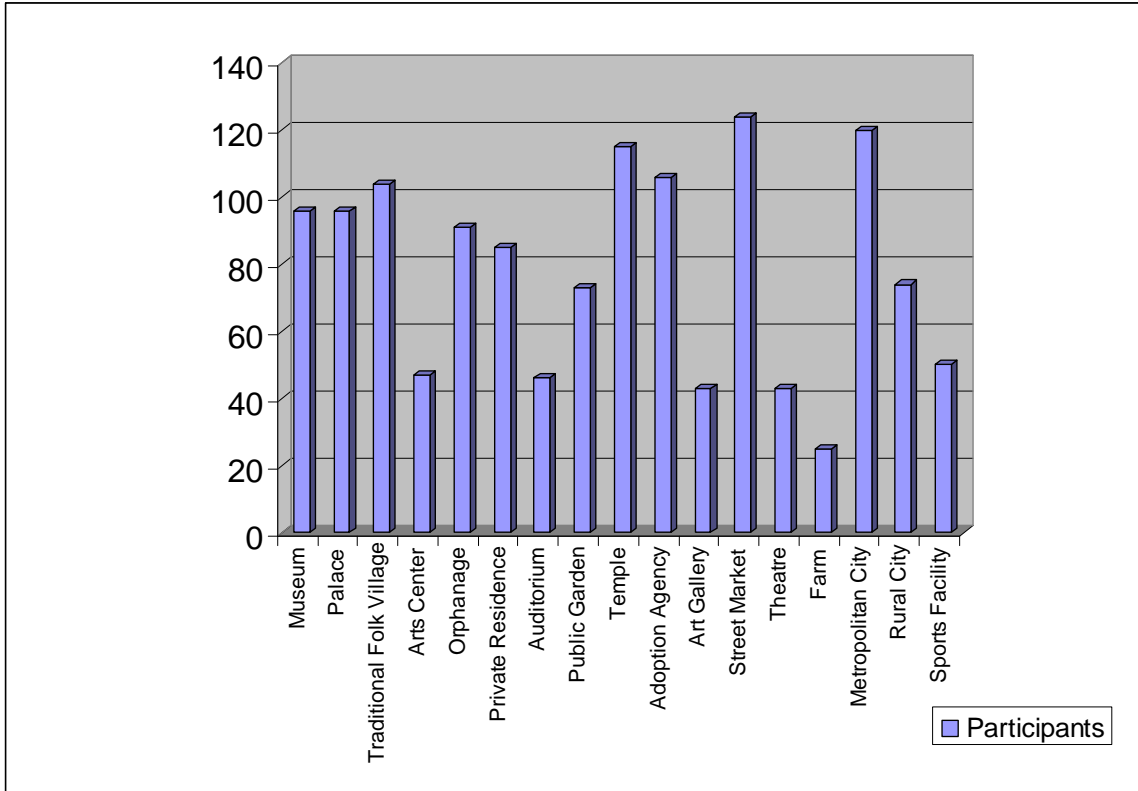
Korean adoptees' report visiting natural features and environments and urban and cultural environments. The most frequented natural locations were mountains, national parks, the ocean and the beach (Figure 4.8).



**Figure 4.8 First Visit Natural Features and Environments Frequency (N = 152)\***

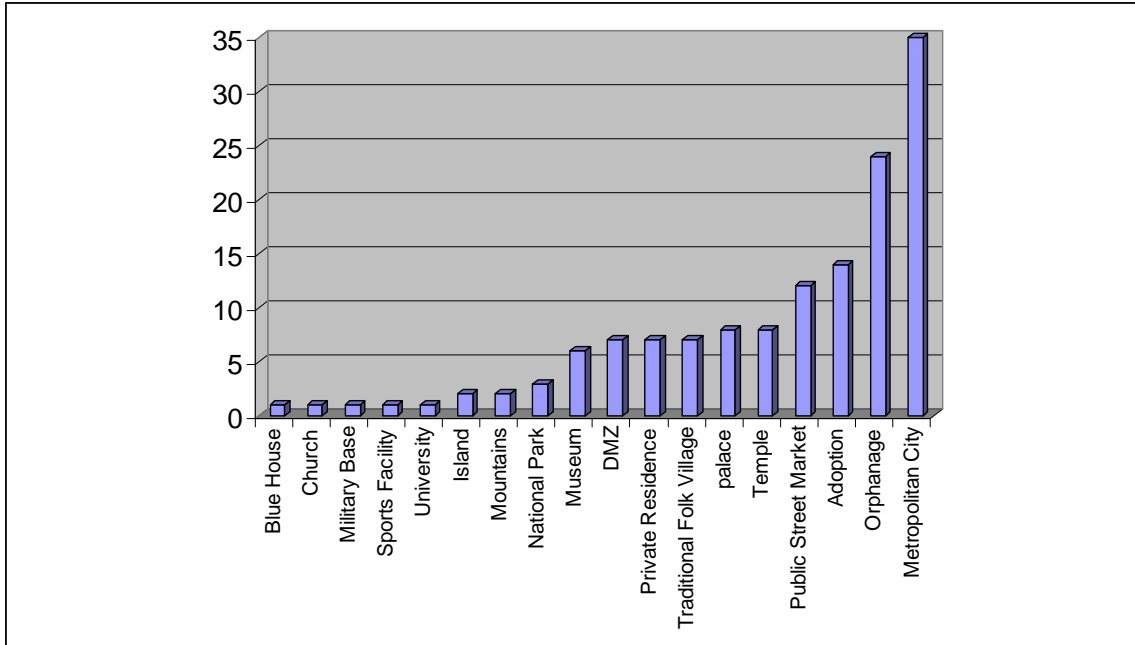
\*Note: n may not total to 152 by characteristic due to participant skipped questions

The most frequented urban and cultural locations were street markets, metropolitan cities and temples and traditional folk villages (Figure 4.9).



**Figure 4.9 First Visit Urban and Cultural Environments Frequency (N = 152)\***  
 \*Note: n may not total to 152 by characteristic due to participant skipped questions

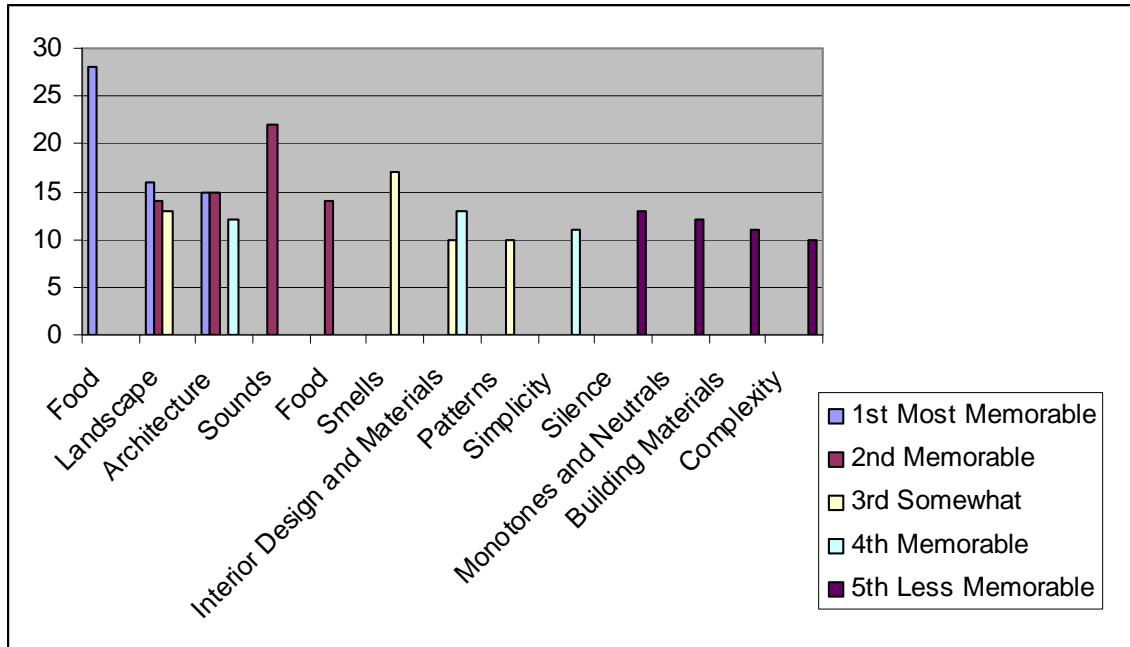
The most memorable locations were metropolitan cities, the orphanage, the adoption agency, public street markets, temples, palaces, and traditional folk villages (Figure 4.10).



**Figure 4.10 First Visit Most Memorable Locations Frequency (N = 152)\***  
 \*Note: n may not total to 152 by characteristic due to participant skipped questions

Participants were asked to rank the top five characteristics of their most memorable location. The choices for response were: vibrant colors, building materials, water, silence, interior design and materials, simplicity, architecture, landscape, patterns, complexity, monotonous and neutrals, smells, sounds, weather, food, nature, plants and trees. Responses were analyzed by frequency. In some cases, four responses are listed due to a tie in response frequency. The first group of most memorable characteristics of the location was the food, the landscape and the architecture. The second group of most memorable characteristics of the location was the sounds, the architecture, the landscape and the food. The third group of most memorable characteristics of the location was the smell, landscape, the interior design and

materials, and patterns. The fourth group of most memorable characteristics of the location was interior design and materials, architecture, and simplicity. The fifth group of most memorable characteristics of the location was silence, monotones and neutrals, building materials and complexity (Figure 4.11).



**Figure 4.11 First Visit Most Memorable Characteristics Frequency (N = 152)\***  
 \*Note: n may not total to 152 by characteristic due to participant skipped questions

### Place Identity and Place Dependence

Place identity and place dependence represent characteristics of place attachment.

Forty eight percent agree with the statement “I identify strongly with this location in Korea”.

Fifty five percent agree with the statement, “My visit to Korea represents my ongoing relationship with Korea” (Table 4.4).

**Table 4.4****First Visit Place Identity and Place Dependence (N = 131)**

<b>Survey Question and Response</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
I feel this location in Korea is a part of me. *		
Strongly Agree and Agree	52	40
Neutral	45	35
Disagree and Strongly Disagree	32	25
I identify strongly with this location in Korea. *		
Strongly Agree and Agree	61	48
Neutral	39	31
Disagree and Strongly Disagree	28	22
I am very attached to this location in Korea. *		
Strongly Agree and Agree	50	39
Neutral	56	43
Disagree and Strongly Disagree	23	18
Visiting this location in Korea says a lot about who I am. *		
Strongly Agree and Agree	62	48
Neutral	39	30
Disagree and Strongly Disagree	29	23
This location in Korea means a lot to me.		
Strongly Agree and Agree	77	59
Neutral	33	25
Disagree and Strongly Disagree	20	15
No other place can compare to my No. 1 ranked most memorable location in Korea.		
Strongly Agree and Agree	31	24
Neutral	34	26
Disagree and Strongly Disagree	65	50
I get more satisfaction out of visiting Korea than any other location.		
Strongly Agree and Agree	40	31
Neutral	35	27
Disagree and Strongly Disagree	55	42
The things I do in Korea I would enjoy doing just as much at a similar site.		
Strongly Agree and Agree	42	32

Neutral	32	25
Disagree and Strongly Disagree	56	43
My visit to Korea represents my ongoing relationship with Korea.		
Strongly Agree and Agree	71	55
Neutral	36	28
Disagree and Strongly Disagree	23	18
It makes me feel sad to think of never visiting Korea again.		
Strongly Agree and Agree	86	66
Neutral	20	15
Disagree and Strongly Disagree	24	19

\*Note: n may not total to 131 by response due to participant skipped questions

### First Visit Toward Ethnic Identity Reconstruction

Sixty seven percent agree with the statements “My trip back to Korea positively reinforces my distinctiveness of being Korean” and “I feel a sense of pride in my ethnic history because of my trip to Korea”. Fifty four percent agree with the statement, “I feel a sense of self worth with rich Korean history after visiting Korea”. (Table 4.5).

**Table 4.5**  
**Ethnic Identification as a Result of First Visit (N = 130)**

<b>Survey Question and Response</b>	<b><u>n</u></b>	<b>%</b>
My trip back to Korea positively reinforces my distinctiveness of being Korean.		
Strongly Agree and Agree	87	67
Neutral	23	18
Disagree and Strongly Disagree	19	15
Before my trip to Korea, I did not view myself as possessing a Korean heritage. *		
Strongly Agree and Agree	50	39
Neutral	22	17
Disagree and Strongly Disagree	56	44
I feel a sense of self worth with rich Korean history after visiting Korea. *		
Strongly Agree and Agree	69	54

Neutral	35	27
Disagree and Strongly Disagree	24	19
I feel a sense of pride in my ethnic history because of my trip to Korea.		
Strongly Agree and Agree	87	67
Neutral	24	19
Disagree and Strongly Disagree	18	14
After my trip, I do not feel a connection to Korea, even though I am Korean.		
Strongly Agree and Agree	24	19
Neutral	19	15
Disagree and Strongly Disagree	86	66

\*Note: n may not total to 130 by response due to participant skipped questions

To compare identity and dependence as characteristics of place attachment toward ethnic identity, over 50 percent agree with the following three statements (Table 4.6).

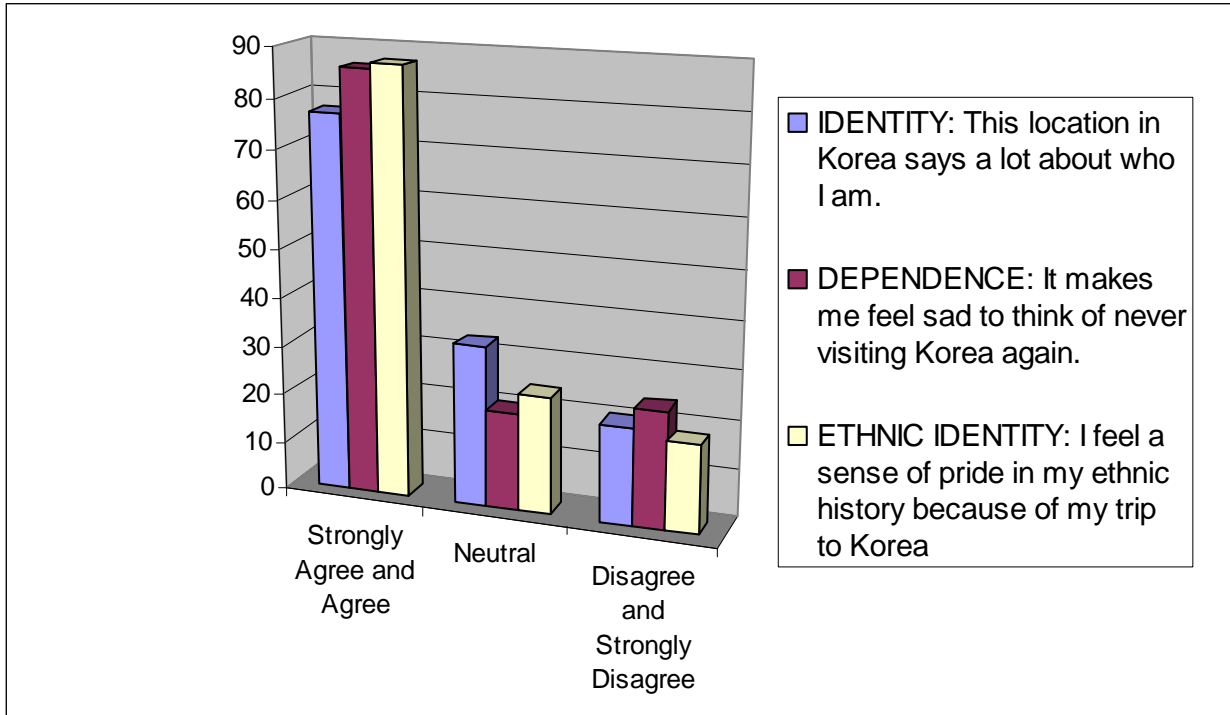
**Table 4.6**  
**Place Identity and Place Dependence Toward Ethnic Identity (N = 130)**

<b>Survey Question and Response</b>	<b><u>n</u></b>	<b>%</b>
<b>IDENTITY</b>		
This location in Korea says a lot about who I am.		
Strongly Agree and Agree	77	59
Neutral	33	25
Disagree and Strongly Disagree	20	15
<b>DEPENDENCE</b>		
It makes me feel sad to think of never visiting Korea again.		
Strongly Agree and Agree	86	66
Neutral	20	15
Disagree and Strongly Disagree	24	19
<b>ETHNIC IDENTITY</b>		
I feel a sense of pride in my ethnic history because of my trip to Korea		
Strongly Agree and Agree	87	67
Neutral	24	19
Disagree and Strongly Disagree	18	14

\*Note: n may not total to 129 by response due to participant skipped questions



Figure 4.12 summarizes response frequency for three separate identity, dependence and ethnic identity statements. Adoptees predominately agree with the identity, dependence and ethnic identity statements.



**Figure 4.12 Place Identity, Place Dependence, Ethnic Identity Comparison  
Response Frequency (N = 130)\***

\*Note: n may not total to 130 by characteristic due to participant skipped questions

Table 4.7 cross-tabulates responses of “yes” or “no” to the question “Did you grow up with Korean ethnic items in your home?” with identity, dependence and ethnic identity responses.

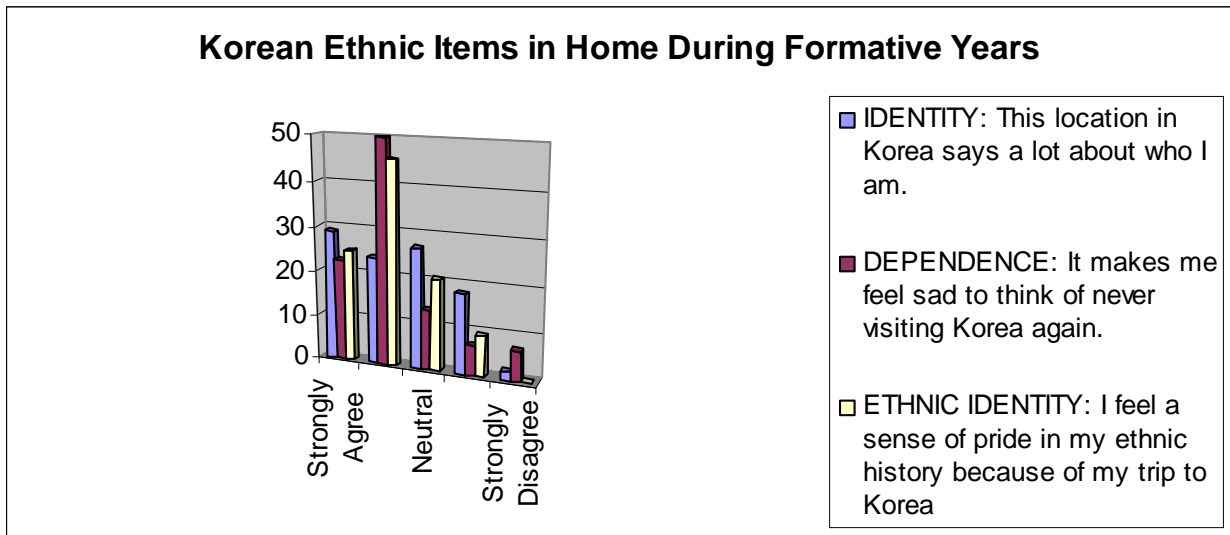
**Table 4.7**  
**Cross-Tabulated Responses to Ethnic Exposure\*\* and**  
**Place Identity and Place Dependence and Ethnic Identity (N = 130)**

<b>Survey Question and Response</b>	<b><u>n</u></b>	<b>%Yes</b>	<b><u>n</u></b>	<b>%No</b>
<b>IDENTITY</b>				
This location in Korea means a lot to me.				
Strongly Agree	14	31	22	27
Agree	11	24	29	35
Neutral	12	27	20	24
Disagree	7	16	9	11
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4
<b>DEPENDENCE</b>				
It makes me feel sad to think of never visiting Korea again.				
Strongly Agree	10	23	20	24
Agree	22	50	32	38
Neutral	6	14	14	17
Disagree	3	7	14	17
Strongly Disagree	3	7	4	5
<b>ETHNIC IDENTITY</b>				
Before my trip to Korea, I did not view myself as possessing a Korean Heritage.				
Strongly Agree	1	2	7	8
Agree	11	26	30	36
Neutral	6	14	15	18
Disagree	17	40	23	28
Strongly Disagree	8	19	8	10

\*Note: n may not total to 129 by response due to participant skipped questions

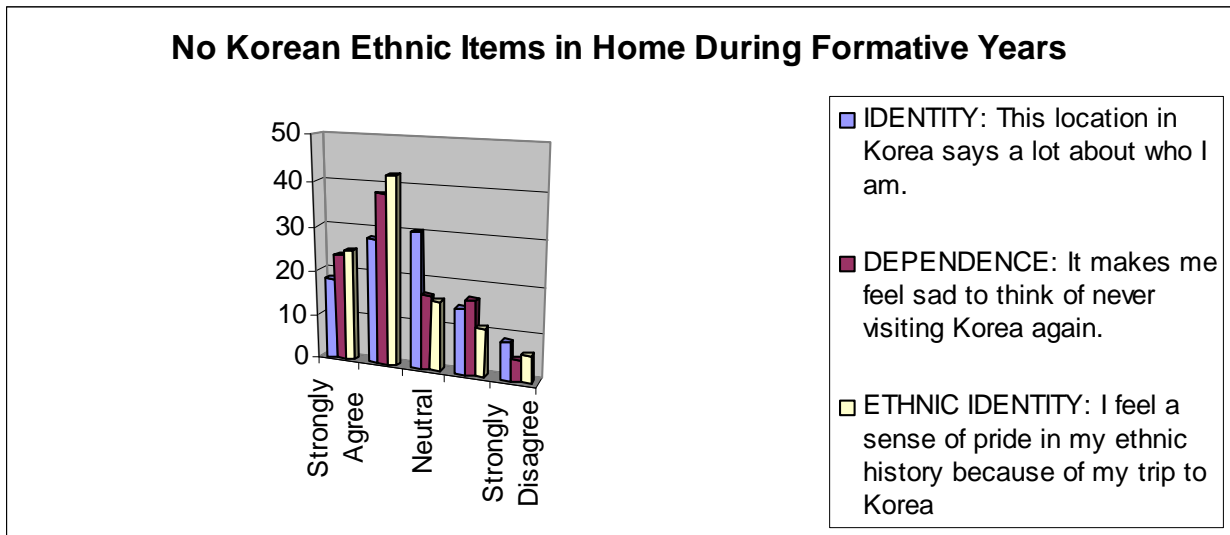
\*\*"Did you grow up with Korean ethnic items in your home?"

Figure 4.13 compares responses to identity, dependence and ethnic identity to adoptees that grew up with Korean ethnic items in their homes. Korean adoptees with Korea ethnic items in their homes most frequently agreed with the dependence statement, “It makes me feel sad to think of never visiting Korea again.” Adoptees did not agree as frequently with the statement “This location in Korea says a lot about who I am.”



**Figure 4.13 Responses to Identity, Dependence and Ethnic Identity as a Result of First Visit in Relationship to Formative Years with Ethnic Items in Home (Percentage of Responses)**

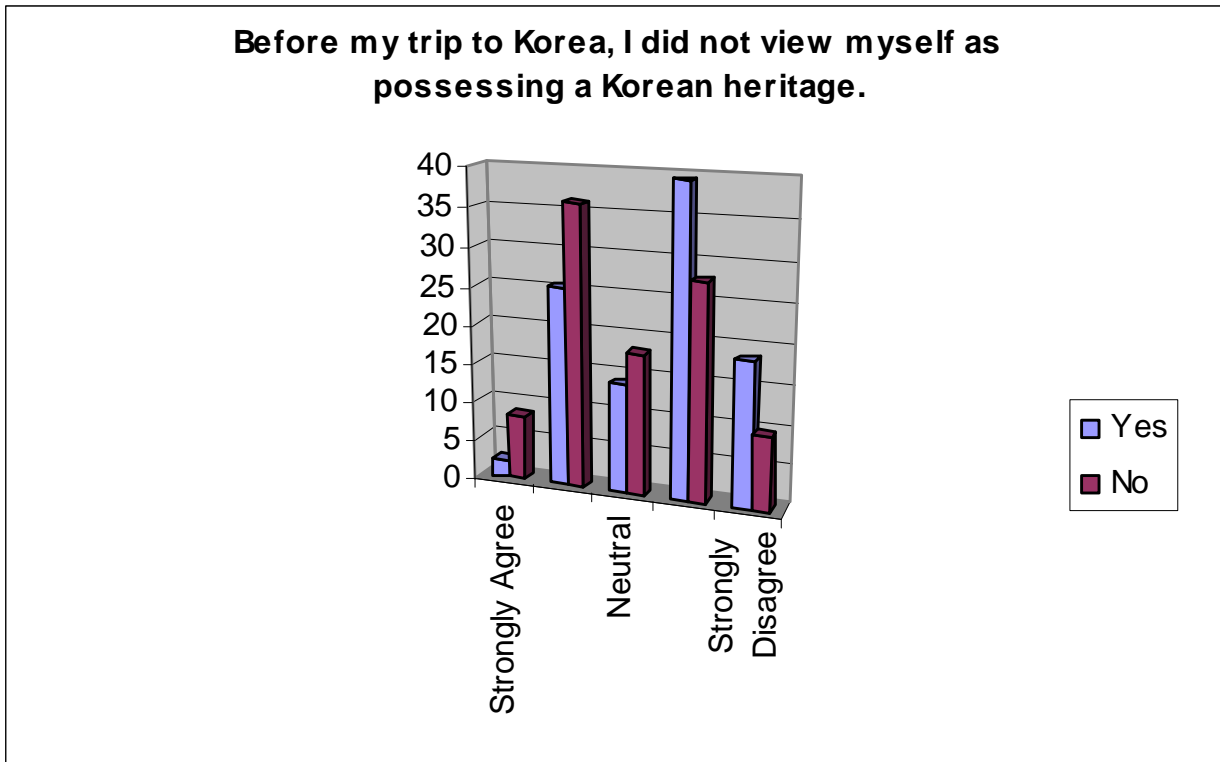
In comparison to identity, dependence and ethnic identity statements, adoptees who did not have ethnic item exposure in their homes during their formative years agree more frequently with the statement, ‘I feel a sense of pride in my ethnic history because of my trip to Korea.’ than with identity and dependence statements, and few adoptees disagree with identity, dependence and ethnic identity statements (Figure 4.14).



**Figure 4.14 Responses to Identity, Dependence and Ethnic Identity as a Result of First Visit in Relationship to Formative Years with no Ethnic Items in Home (Percentage of Responses)**

Figure 4.15 summarizes responses cross-tabulated with the response of “yes” or “no” to the question, “Did you grow up with Korean ethnic items in your home?” to responses for ethnic identity reconstruction as a result of the first trip home. Responses for “Agree” and “Disagree” are in opposite relationship for adoptees exposed to Korean ethnic items in their home compared to adoptees with no Korean ethnic item exposure in their home. Adoptees’ exposed to Korean ethnic items did not agree as frequently with the statement, “Before my

trip to Korea, I did not view myself as possessing a Korean heritage.” as adoptees who were not exposed to Korean ethnic items in their home. Preliminary findings may suggest that adoptee’s with Korean ethnic items in their home already identify with possessing a Korean heritage.



**Figure 4.15 Responses to Korean Heritage Ethnic Identity as a Result of First Visit in Relationship to Formative Years Ethnic Items in Home “Did you grow up with Korean ethnic items in your home?” (Percentage of Responses)**

Of the 451 participants who started the survey, 152 returned to Korea or 34 percent returned and 129 or twenty-nine percent of participants completed the survey in its entirety.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSION

#### **The Adult Adoptee's Ethnic Identity Reconstruction**

Holt Children Services (Founding adoption agency for Korean adoptees), saw the importance for the families of adoptees to expose their adopted children to experiences in Korean Culture and ethnic heritage. From survey findings of participants who traveled back to Korea, sixty eight percent did not attend Korean culture camp, eighty percent did not attend any type of Korean lessons or school, and seventy two percent of participants did not associate with other Korean ethnic families. Previous literature supports that without exposure to Korean culture, the adoptee experiences difficulty forming an ethnic identity (Meier, 1998). Perhaps this is why the first trip is meaningful. The adoptee is finally exposed to their ethnic culture and from this exposure, the adoptee is able to experience an ethnic identity reconstruction from their experiences in Korea for sense of belonging and identification with their heritage.

The adult adoptee not previously exposed to Korean ethnic items in the home report more frequently than adoptees exposed to Korean ethnic items in the home that before the return trip to Korea, the adoptee did not view oneself as possessing a Korean heritage. Survey findings also support the adoptee's experience of positive reinforcement of distinctiveness of being Korean and a sense of pride in their ethnic history after their trip. Preliminary interpretation of these findings suggests the importance to the adult adoptee to experience the first return trip and the meaning to the adoptee for ethnic identity reconstruction.

As orphans taken to another country, the adult adoptee's return to Korea represented something priceless that the adoptees had lost and then found. Adoptees discovery of their roots and their heritage re-established a link to their past (Kim, 2006). To find what was lost, adoptees requested to visit Seoul City Hall steps where they were told they were left or abandoned. Even when there was no hope of a birthfamily reunion, a special void was filled when they experienced the surroundings and touched the physical steps where they were left (Kim, 2006). Survey results support the importance the adoptee places on visiting the adoption agency and the orphanage to experience their final tie to Korea before their journey to their adoptive country. Perhaps this tangible experience begins the reconstruction journey, of previous severed ties, to an unknown past and this is why the experience is extremely emotional for the adult adoptee.

From the demographics portion of the survey, ninety-seven percent of adoptees were adopted into Caucasian homes. Sixty-two percent of adoptees were not familiarized with Korean culture in their formative years (8-14). From these findings, the majority of participants of the survey grew up in Caucasian homes with very little to no exposure to Korean ethnic culture. Seventy-three percent of participants viewed themselves as American. Participants of the survey grew up in a Caucasian world with very little to no Korean ethnic association. From survey findings, this may be why one Korean adoptee reports, "...I think it has to do with identifying myself in terms of negations... you're not white, you're not Korean and that's how it always is" (Nelson, 2007). From the adoptees' first visit, descriptive statistics of frequency responses to place identity, place dependence and ethnic identity as result of the adoptees' first return visit suggest a relationship between place attachment and ethnic identity reconstruction. Preliminary findings suggest differences in ethnic identity

reconstruction among adoptees exposed to Korean ethnic items in their homes during their formative years compared to adoptees without Korean ethnic items while they were growing up. Perhaps the adult adoptee's first visit experience is the first step toward ethnic identity reconstruction which assists in building psychological well-being.

### **Place Attachment Architecture Relevance**

Adult adoptees' frequency responses of architecture, landscape, interior design and materials, patterns, simplicity, sounds, silence, monotones and neutrals, building materials and complexity in preliminary evaluation suggest the relevance of Korean architectural characteristics to the adoptee. The most frequent responses for memorable place locations were: Korean metropolitan city, adoption agency and orphanage, markets, temples, palaces, traditional folk villages, museums, national parks and private residences which imply an ethnic association due to the distinct Korean characteristics of each location. From survey findings, adult adoptees' identification with Korean ethnic locations and characteristics represent the importance of the first visit to Korea, especially in respect to Korean architectural design meaning to the adoptee. The adoptee reports finding meaning and identification to distinct Korean environments.

### **Preliminary Interpretation of Memorable Place Location Characteristics**

Preliminary interpretation of most memorable locations and most memorable characteristics from survey responses imply the importance of distinct Korean ethnic design and architecture for the adult adoptee. From preliminary findings, incorporation of these qualities and aesthetics into the young adoptee's living environment may assist in beginning



reconstruction of the adoptees' ethnic identity and in conjunction, enhance their psychological well-being. While it may seem superficial to suggest that physical items are all that is needed to support ethnic identity reconstruction and well-being; the value of ethnic characteristics and qualities within the young adoptee's living environment may provide some sense of ethnic association and thus ethnic identification for the adoptee to their new western environment. This ethnic identification to Korean ethnic characteristics in the living environment may begin the young adoptee's ethnic reconstruction to a mysterious and unknown past, a past that they may embrace and take pride in.



**Figure 5.1 Buddhist Temple, Cheju Island, Korea (Photograph: Deborah Napier)**

An example for incorporation into the young adoptee's living environment might be characteristics from the temples and palaces. If the architect were to include vibrant colors, patterns, unique building materials and complexity into the young adoptee's living environment, these qualities may enhance a Korean ethnic association for the young adoptee. Possibly from this ethnic identification, the adoptee may feel proud and a sense of belonging to their previous culture, now thousands of miles away (Figure 5.1).



**Figure 5.2 Traditional Kimchee Farm, South of Seoul, Korea  
(Photograph: Deborah Napier)**



**Figure 5.3 Traditional Kimchee Farm, South of Seoul, Korea  
(Photograph: Deborah Napier)**

Another example for incorporation into the young adoptee's living environment might be from characteristics found at Korean traditional folk villages. The villages exhibit traditional Korean architecture, simplicity, monotonous and neutrals, repeating patterns and natural building materials (Figure 5.2, Figure 5.3). Perhaps an adoptee may associate and find Korean ethnic identification in an uncluttered simplistic environment among a neutral color palette and repeating patterns. The sense of order and simplicity and natural materials may comfort and aid an ethnic identification to their Korean ethnic heritage.

While each of these examples are preliminary interpretations for incorporation into the young adoptee's living spaces; these findings are just the beginning in terms of architecture and interior design elements in support of the adult and child Korean adoptee's ethnic identity reconstruction.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The preliminary results of this research support previous findings of the Korean adoptees' difficulty in reconstructing a positive ethnic identity from minimal exposure during formative years to Korean ethnic culture, role models, language and education. The adoptee maneuvers through life lacking an ethnic identity and similarly a sense of history and belonging. This research presents the adult adoptee's relationship between place attachment to the birth country and ethnic identity reconstruction. From frequency analysis, locations in Korea and memorable characteristics provide a starting point to the importance and incorporation of tangible, ethnic, architectural characteristics in the young adoptee's living space.

Further analysis of existing survey data may reveal similarities and differences among contrasting groups of participants and their responses. For example, among adoptees that experience place attachment and ethnic identity from the first visit, what is the meaning associated with predominant characteristics of the most memorable locations visited? Is there a difference in response to place attachment and ethnic identity among adoptees who have made multiple trips back to their birth country? What is the meaning and association for the adoptee who has chosen to stay in Korea, and where and why have they chosen a residence in a country they know very little of? Is there an evolving dimension of place attachment for the Korean adoptee? Finally, to influence architectural design for adoptee living spaces, what do adult adoptees bring home as a reminder of their place attachment experience and how has the adult adoptee's living space changed as a result of the first visit to Korea? Each of these concepts are just the beginning, but when carried further provide valuable aspects in terms of place attachment for architectural design for the young adoptee's living space. Such work would require further study at the doctoral level, further statistical analysis of the data, a refinement of the survey instrument, and supporting interviews for qualitative analysis.

## **Conclusion: Final Thoughts**

“Research on today’s adult Korean adoptees lays the foundation for future comparative explorations of the issues affecting current and future transracial adoptee populations” (Kim, 2009, p.17). If the displaced, interracial, intercountry adult Korean adoptee without a sense of history and belonging, experiences an emotional, life-changing experience, - place attachment - , their first return visit to Korea, and through this experience is able to reconstruct their ethnic identity; we can learn from this experience to design for place attachment within the young adoptee’s home environment to support an ethnic identity reconstruction and thus begin the healing process from displacement. Adult adoptees report specific memorable, emotional experiences and associate architectural, landscape and interior design characteristics of their most memorable locations their first visit home. From further research into place attachment, the architectural designer may incorporate Korean architectural concepts into the young adoptee’s living environment to support ethnic identity reconstruction and thus support psychological well-being.

Simplicity, moderation, constraint, and a deep respect for all things natural have remained the hallmarks of Korean architecture and interiors throughout the ages. Korea is unique in its acceptance of contrast and lack of formality as part of its expression. Old is intertwined with new, rural with urban, unstructured with structured, noise with silence, and light with dark (Iwatate & Kim, 2006, p. 15).

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## APPENDIX A

### WSU Institutional Review Board Exempt Certification

MEMORANDUM

TO: Bob Scarfo and Deborah Napier,

FROM: Patrick Conner (for) Kris Miller, Chair, WSU Institutional Review Board (3005)

DATE: 12/29/2008

SUBJECT: Certification of Exemption, IRB Number 10688-001

Based on the Exemption Determination Application submitted for the study titled Korean Adoptee Place Attachment in Relationship to Ethnic Identity, and assigned IRB # 10688, the WSU Institutional Review Board has determined that the study satisfies the criteria for Exempt Research contained in 45CFR 46.

Exempt certification does not relieve the investigator from the responsibility of providing continuing attention to protection of human subjects participating in the study and adherence to ethical standards for research involving human participants.

This certification is valid only for the study protocol as it was submitted to the IRB. Studies certified as Exempt are not subject to annual review. If any changes are made to the study protocol, you must submit the changes to the IRB for determination that the study remains Exempt before implementing the changes. Request for Amendment forms are available online at <http://www.irb.wsu.edu/forms.asp>.

In accordance with federal regulations, this Certification of Exemption and a copy of the study protocol identified by this certification must be kept by the principal investigator for THREE years following completion of the project.

It is important to note that certification of exemption is NOT approval by the IRB. The study materials should not include the statement that the WSU IRB has reviewed and approved the study for human subject participation. Please remove all statements of IRB Approval and contact information from study materials that will be disseminated to participants.

Washington State University is covered under Human Subjects Assurance Number FWA00002946 which is on file with the Office for Human Research Protections.

If you have questions, please contact the Institutional Review Board at (509) 335-3668. Any revised materials can be mailed to the Office of Research Assurances (Campus Zip 3005), faxed to (509) 335-6410, or in some cases by electronic mail, to [irb@mail.wsu.edu](mailto:irb@mail.wsu.edu).

MEMORANDUM (Contin.)

TO: Bob Scarfo and Deborah Napier,

FROM: Patrick Conner (for) Kris Miller, Chair, WSU Institutional Review Board (3005)

DATE: 12/29/2008

SUBJECT: Certification of Exemption, IRB Number 10688-001

Review Type: New Protocol

Review Category: Exempt

Date Received: 12/11/2008

Exemption Category: 45 CFR 46.101 (b)(2)

OGRD No.: N/A

Funding Agency: N/A

You have received this notification as you are referenced on a document within the [MyResearch.wsu.edu](https://MyResearch.wsu.edu) system. You can change how you receive notifications by visiting <https://MyResearch.wsu.edu/MyPreferences.aspx>

Please Note: This notification will not show other recipients as their notification preferences require separate delivery.

## APPENDIX B SURVEY INSTRUMENT

This survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Participation in this study is voluntary, and consent is given freely without coercion. All information collected from the online survey is anonymous with no specific identifying information. All results are for the purpose of research. If you are comfortable participating in this survey please select the appropriate answer below.

Yes I would like to participate.

No I do not choose to participate.

### KOREAN ADOPTEE REQUEST FOR DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

What is your age? (*Defined ranges to choose from, <20, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, <50*)

What is your gender?

Where do you live?

Did you attend college?

Did you complete a degree?

Are your adoptive parents college graduates?

If you have adult children, are they college graduates?

What is your highest degree completed?

What is your profession?

What are your hobbies?

Do you socialize with other Korean adoptees? *Yes No*

Do you socialize with other ethnic Koreans? *Yes No*

Do you speak Korean?

At what age did you leave Korea to arrive in your adoptive country?

(*Defined ranges to choose from, <1 year, between 1 and 2 years, > 3 years old*)

Where did you grow up?

What is your adoptive father's profession?

What is your adoptive mother's profession?

Are both of your adoptive parents Caucasian? *Yes No*

Do you have siblings? *Yes No*

Are your siblings adopted? *Yes No Not Applicable*

Do you have at least 1 adopted Korean sibling? *Yes No Not Applicable*

What is/was your college education focus?

Is there anything else you would like me to know?

---

### KOREAN CULTURE EXPOSURE AND FIRST VISIT BACK TO KOREA

During your formative years, what was your exposure to Korean culture?

Did you associate with other Korean adoptees in your formative years (8-14 years)?

Yes No

Did you associate with other Korean nationals in your formative years (8-14 years)?

Yes No

Do you speak Korean? Yes No

Have you traveled to Korea? Yes No

What year was your first visit back to Korea?

How old were you when you first visited Korea?

What city or cities did you visit in Korea?

How often do you visit Korea?

How many times have you visited Korea?

FIRST VISIT BACK TO KOREA EXPECTATION AND EXPERIENCE

Please answer the following questions.

I went back to Korea specifically as a tourist for a vacation.

Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

My parents decided it would be a good experience for me to visit Korea, it was not my decision.

Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

I went on a tour of Korea that was sponsored by my adoption agency.

Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

I expected to find what was missing in my life when I went back to Korea.

Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

My experience was extremely emotional and poignant.

Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

My experience was distressing and upsetting.

Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

My experience was entirely unemotional and not memorable.

Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

I want to visit Korea again as soon as possible.

Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Neutral                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

PLACE LOCATION

*Please check all that apply.*

My first trip back to Korea, I visited the following natural environments.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mountains     | <input type="checkbox"/> Stream                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> National Park | <input type="checkbox"/> Waterfall                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ocean         | <input type="checkbox"/> Hot Springs                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Island        | <input type="checkbox"/> Beach                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> River         | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify:<br>_____) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lake          |   |

My first trip back to Korea, I visited the following urban and cultural environments.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Museum                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Adoption Agency                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Palace                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Art Gallery                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Traditional Folk Village | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Street Market             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts Center              | <input type="checkbox"/> Theatre                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Orphanage                | <input type="checkbox"/> Farm                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence        | <input type="checkbox"/> Metropolitan City                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Performance       | <input type="checkbox"/> Rural City                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Auditorium               | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports Facility                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Garden            | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify:<br>_____) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Temple                   |   |

From the natural and urban and cultural places visited, please rank the top three most memorable places visited by location, name and city. (ex. Palace, Gyeongbok, Seoul).

\_\_\_\_\_

Please describe why the number 1 ranked location was most memorable.

PLACE CHARACTERISTICS

Please rank the 5 most memorable characteristics of the locations described above giving “1 to the most memorable characteristic and “5” to the lesser memorable characteristic.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vibrant Colors                | <input type="checkbox"/> Patterns               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building Materials            | <input type="checkbox"/> Complexity             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Monotones and Neutrals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Silence                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Smells                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interior Design and Materials | <input type="checkbox"/> Sounds                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Simplicity                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Weather                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Nature                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Plants and Trees       |

\_\_\_Food

\_\_\_Other (Please specify:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please summarize why the number 1 ranked characteristic was most memorable.

---

**PLACE IDENTITY**

*Please think back to your number 1 ranked location and select your response to the following questions from agree to strongly disagree.*

I feel this location in Korea is a part of me.

Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

I identify strongly with this location in Korea.

Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

I am very attached to this location in Korea.

Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Visiting this location in Korea says a lot about who I am.

Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

This location in Korea means a lot to me.

Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

I do not feel like I am accepted in Korea.

Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

I do not belong in Korea.

Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

**PLACE DEPENDENCE**

*Please think back to your number 1 ranked location and select your response to the following questions from agree to strongly disagree.*

No other place can compare to my number 1 ranked most memorable location in Korea.

Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly



Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_\_\_

I get more satisfaction out of visiting Korea than any other.

Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree  
Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_\_\_

The things I do in Korea I would enjoy doing just as much at a similar site.

Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree  
Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_\_\_

My visit to Korea represents my ongoing relationship with Korea.

Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree  
Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_\_\_

It makes me feel sad to think of never visiting Korea again.

Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree  
Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_\_\_

#### PLACE ATTACHMENT TOWARD ETHNIC IDENTITY

*Please think back to your number 1 ranked location and select your response to the following questions from agree to strongly disagree.*

My trip back to Korea positively reinforces my distinctiveness of being Korean.

Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree  
Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_\_\_

Before my trip to Korea, I did not view myself as possessing a Korean heritage.

Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree  
Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_\_\_

I feel a sense of self worth with rich Korean history after visiting Korea.

Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree  
Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_\_\_

I feel a sense of pride in my ethnic history because of my trip to Korea.

Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree  
Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_\_\_

After my trip, I do not feel a connection to Korea, even though I am Korean.

Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree  
Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C

### Research Interest Resume for Deborah S. Napier

Deborah's formal exposure to the Korean adoptee community began with her attendance at the First Annual Korean American Adoptive Family Network (KAAN) Conference in the summer of 1999 in Los Angeles, California. As a Korean adoptee herself, Deborah's adoptee experience was rich and rewarding with a supportive network of family and friends. With hesitation, Deborah attended the conference, and after attendance of sessions with adoptees and adoptive parents, Deborah immediately empathized with adoptees' heartfelt stories of alienation and sense of confusion for feeling American on the inside and looking Korean/Asian on the outside. Having grown up in an environment with no ethnic identification, Deborah contemplated, is there an event in the adoptees' life that enables ethnic reconstruction for the adoptee to embrace their Korean ethnicity with pride? From that first conference in 1999 to present research interests, Deborah has continued to be involved in adoptee and adoptive parent networks, specifically as an advocate for the best interest of the child.

### **Adoptee Organizations / Affiliations**

Adoptees For Children

<http://adoptees4children.org/>

Member and advocate since Fall 2007

International Korean Adoptee Associations

<http://gathering.ikaa.info/en/>

Participant since 2004

Asian Adult Adoptees of Washington

[http://www.aaawashington.org/a\\_index.php](http://www.aaawashington.org/a_index.php)

Member since 2003

Korean American Adoptee Adoptive Family Network

<http://www.kaanet.co/>

Participant since 1999

## Research Interest Resume for Deborah S. Napier Continued

### **Publications, Presentations and Session Participation**

#### **2007 International Korean Adoptee Associations IKAA Gathering 2007**

The global Korean adoptee community

Seoul, Korea

Participant and Responsible for Online Survey of participant demographics and economic summary

#### **2005 Korean Adoptee Mini Gathering**

Las Vegas, Nevada

Participant

#### **2004 The International Gathering of Korean Adoptees**

Seoul, Korea

*We adoptees have taken flight all over the world-first as youth and now adults to our birth country. May this coming journey be one to remember as we learn about our heritage, ourselves and each other.*

(The Gathering 2004)

Participant

#### **2003 Korean Adoptee Mini Gathering**

Portland, OR

Participant

#### **2002 Korean American Adoptee Adoptive Family Network Fourth Annual Conference**

Sharing Strengths to Build Community Partnerships

Bloomington, Minnesota

Publication and Presenter: Creating Ties to Korea

#### **2001 Korean American Adoptee Adoptive Family Network Third Annual Conference**

Common Ground: "Exploring Experiences That Unite Us"

Seattle, Washington

Presenter: Adult Adoptee parent session

#### **1999 Korean American Adoptee Adoptive Family Network First Annual Conference**

A Tapestry of Voices and Energies Raised in Unity

Los Angeles, California

Participant: Adoptive parent discussions