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생활과학석사 학위논문

**Experiences of relationships with parents
and social figures among Korean early
study abroad students**

한국인 조기유학생의 부모자녀관계 및 사회관계 적응
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Abstract

This study aimed to understand the changes experienced by early study abroad students in the relationships with their parents while apart, the newly developed relationships while they were abroad and how all these relationships affect their adjustment abroad. To achieve these goals, face-to-face, one-on-one interviews were conducted with seven Korean adult returnees who were early study abroad students in their adolescence and the data was analyzed with an interpretative phenomenological approach (Smith & Osborn, 2007). The following four themes were emerged from the data: a) Mixed feeling towards parents' sacrifice, b) From physical distance to the distance of heart, c) Supplementary parental roles: new relationships with peers and adults, and d) Beyond just companionship: Accompaniment, relatedness, and a sense of belonging.

The first theme suggests that participants held mixed feelings towards their parents' sacrifice. On the one hand, they came to appreciate the sacrifices that their parents made for their success and their gratitude towards parents also built them motivation towards success. On the other hand, because the participants did not want to disappoint their parents, the strong sense of obligation to do well at school also added pressure on them. For some participants, the gratitude towards parents' sacrifice also worked to prevent them from seeking support from their parents during tough times, fearing that it would only add to their parents' worries.

Second, five out of seven participants concurred that the extent of sharing with their parents decreased over time. The main reason that the participants chose to conceal their difficulties from their parents was that they believed that it would only make their parents worry. Also, as the parents were not able to resolve their problems with the distance, some thought that it was unnecessary to tell parents about their struggles. In particular, not being able to receive needed help and guidance from parents and a decreased sharing of daily life seemed to have a greater impact on two of the female participants' emotions and their relationship with parents. Furthermore, because of the distance there were fewer chances for the participants to solve the problems they had in their relationship with parents and this could worsen the parent-child relationships that were falling apart. Nevertheless, the study also found another side of the story. Participants who maintained a great extent of sharing due to their parents' receptiveness and openness, also maintained a close relationship even with the physical distance.

Third, the findings also suggest that peers with better knowledge about the environment than their parents, could considerably facilitate the early study abroad students' adaptation to the new environment, through well-timed and handy guidance which is not viable from their parents. Other adult figures, such as the host family or people from church, also played an influential role in their adjustment. It is further suggested that as adults,

those people could provide not only help, but also control to the youths which is needed in helping them adjust and preventing them from delinquency.

Lastly, although loneliness was throughout the early study abroad journey, good relationship with peers brought more than good company. The relatedness and sense of belonging the youths could attain from positive peer relationships also greatly facilitated their adjustment in the context of parental absence. As a whole, this study sheds light on the phenomenon of navigating relationships with parents, friends, and other adult figures in the context of parental absence among early study abroad students. Findings show that despite peers and other adult figures partially supplementing the role of parents in the context of parents' physical absence, parents could still be a strong source of support for the participants even in the context of overseas separation. There is therefore merit in further research on these topics to bring about better support for these youths and may also, benefit other populations in the context of parental absence.

Keywords: Korean early study abroad students, adolescence, parent-child relationships, transnational family, social relationship

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Chapter 1: Introduction

“Early study abroad” is a literal English translation of a Korean phrase, “Jogi yuhak”, which refers to studying abroad at an early age spanning across the pre-teen to teenage years. While some students are accompanied by one parent, usually the mother, some others arrive in the foreign country alone (Tsong & Liu, 2009). This study focuses only on students who arrive in the foreign country without their parents. Most of the early study abroad students are from Asian countries, such as Taiwan, Korea, Hong Kong and China (Hamilton, 1993; Zhou, 1998). For most families, sending younger children to study abroad is to pursue better education opportunities (Tsong & Liu, 2009). In Korea, the trend of families sending their children to study abroad started from the early to mid-1990s and has increased rapidly during the 2000s (Ihm & Choi, 2015; Kang & Abelman, 2015). More than ten years has passed since the trend started in Korea. Now might be a good time to carry out a study on this group of early study abroad students, as they are completing their studies abroad and returning back to Korea.

Because early study abroad students started their journey at a younger age, one may expect that the experience of early study abroad students would be drastically different from that of the international students who leave their home for higher education abroad after entering adulthood. The most notable difference is that most early study abroad students

experienced the premature separation from their parents when they are still in their adolescence, a transitional period marked with significant changes in one's relationships with both parents and peers (Santrock, 2003). During adolescence, parental support and supervision continue to be important for healthy psychosocial development of adolescents while the peer and other social influences increase a great deal (Brown, 1990; Gould & Mazzeo, 1982; Simmons & Blyth, 1987). For early study abroad students, however, growing up away from their home alone in a foreign country places the youths in a situation where their parents are hard to reach on a daily basis and they receive possibly lesser support and supervision than they are used to. In addition, as they are alone and directly exposed to the world without the physical protection of their family, they would possibly receive more extra-familial influence both positive and negative compared to their peers who live together with their families. However, we know very little about how their relationships with parents change and are redefined in the context of parental absence and new relationships with other people. As early study abroad students try to adapt to their new life alone as a teenager, peers and other adult figures are newly introduced into their life. Still, we have very little understanding about these new relationships and how parents and these people influence their adjustment to the new environment where they have to be on their own. The present study attempts to shed light on the phenomenon of navigating relationships with parents, friends, and other

adult figures in the context of parental absence among early study abroad students by using an interpretative phenomenological analysis (Smith & Osborn, 2007). To understand this phenomenon, individual interviews were conducted in person with seven Korean adult returnees who had left home alone for early study abroad in U.S., New Zealand, or China, in their adolescence.

Studies on early study abroad students' adjustment mainly focused on acculturation, school adjustment, or kinds of support that are helpful for adaptation (Bang, 2008; Kwon, 2010; Popadiuk, 2009). It is notable that parents were not considered as a potential source of support in these studies despite the widely held belief that parents (as primary caregiver) and parent-child bonds are universally important to children at all ages in any context (Rohner, Khaleque & Cournoyer, 2005). On the one hand, with the physical separation and decreased amount of time that the youths spend with their parents, one might suspect that their connection with parents would weaken. In fact, Zhou (1998) in his study on Chinese early study abroad students found that the quality of parent-child communication decreased as time passed and cautioned that the adolescents could eventually become more alienated from their parents. On the other hand, the experience away from parents could offer a rare yet valuable opportunity for adolescents to explore new relationships and learn to be independent early on. Because adolescence is a period where individuals start to explore the world outside

of the family (Brown, 1990), it is possible that early study abroad students may come to appreciate the support from their new friends and other adult figures more than before and cherish the independence and comfortable distance from their parents (Collins & Russell, 1991; Larson & Richards, 1991). In this sense, living abroad away from parents as a teenager while keeping in touch and meeting up occasionally may not negatively impact their relationship with parents. Hence, part of this study is dedicated to understanding the changes early study abroad students experience in the relationship with their parents while separated from them and how their parents influenced their adjustment despite the physical distance.

Adolescence is also a period where peer and social influences begin to increase in adolescents' lives. Research shows that adolescents tend to spend more time with their peers than they had before (Brown, 1990; Larson & Richards, 1991). Compared to younger children, adolescents turn to their peers more often as the source of advice, support and comfort (Gould & Mazzeo, 1982). On the one hand, for early study abroad students who relocate to a new environment alone and do not know anyone, it may not be easy for them to turn to peers around them for support and comfort as other adolescents do. On the other hand, the youths who live away from their parents also have more freedom to choose how they spend time so that they may choose to invest more time in developing and building stronger relationships with new friends. When there is less parental supervision,

protection, and guidance but more time and freedom at hands of the adolescents, one might suspect that the newly developed relationships may be potentially delinquent or unhealthy, as literature has suggested that adolescents who spend less time and have less interaction with their parents are more likely to receive susceptibility to negative peer influence (Kandel, 1980; Steinberg, 1987). However, it is also possible that the absence of parents may provide them an opportunity to learn to bond with and to find support from others. With numerous unanswered questions about this aspect of their lives, this study therefore also aims to understand the nature of early study abroad students' relationships with people around them in the context of parental absence and how these people influence their adjustment.

This study aims to understand the phenomenon that adolescents stay connected with parents in the context of physical separation and interact with people present in the context of physical distance from parents. To understand this phenomenon, the present study aims to answer the following questions:

1. In what ways does the relationship between early study abroad students and their parents change over time in the context of physical separation?
2. How do their parents influence their adjustment despite the physical distance?

3. What is the nature of early study abroad students' relationship with people around them in the context of physical distance from parents?
4. How do these people influence their adjustment?

Using interpretative phenomenological analysis, this study investigated the experience of seven Korean adult returnees' who left by themselves during their adolescence for education in English speaking countries.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. The phenomenon of early study abroad

The early study abroad students were first known as “parachute kids” through media coverage. The term "parachute kids" was originally created for wealthy Asian kids who were sent by their parents to live and attend schools in the United States (Hamilton, 1993). It has later been adopted by media as well as scholars, to refer to unaccompanied Asian kids who live and study in a foreign country. In Korea, research mainly uses the term "early study abroad", which is the literal translation from its Korean expression, *jogi (choji) yuhak*, to term the phenomenon of minors traveling to a foreign country for schools, usually without parent’s accompaniment. Kang and Abelmann (2011) also referred to the phenomenon of early study abroad as “pre-college study abroad (PSA)” (p.90), which helped differentiate the early study abroad students from the commonly known adult international students who study abroad in the pursuit of higher education (Lee, 2014). Alternative appellations for Korean early study abroad students also include "young Korean international students" (Cho, 2011, p. 114), "youths studying abroad" (Jo, 2007, p. 244), and "unaccompanied Korean adolescents" (Kim, 2014, p. 2). Due to the subtly negative image implied by the phrase “parachute kids”, the term "early study abroad" is used in the present study to describe the phenomenon of the minors living and studying abroad without parents. I refer to the

unaccompanied youths who participate in the early-study-abroad journey as "early study abroad students".

Studies on early study abroad students were primarily based on the individuals who left for English-speaking countries, such as the U.S., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand (Lee, 2014). These countries are also believed to be popular destinations for early study abroad practice (Kuo & Royiscar, 2006; Zhou, 1998). According to studies on early study abroad students in the United States, the students start their journey at various ages, ranging from six to eighteen, but the majority of them are between the ages of 13 to 17 years old (Chiang-Hom, 2004; Lin, 1998; Zhou, 1998). Their living arrangements include staying with host families, living in the school dorm, and living with relatives or family friends (Chiang-Hom, 2004; Lin, 1998). Some might also live by themselves or with their siblings (Chiang-Hom, 2004).

A number of reasons account for the early study abroad practice. For families and individuals, perhaps the most important reason is to pursue better education opportunities (Tsong & Liu, 2009). Traditional Asian culture has been known for its emphasis on education and academic achievement as a vital means for distinction and social mobility (Kim, 1998; Zhou, 1998). However, because admission to an elite college in some Asian countries entails fierce competition, attending a good college becomes the key for success and the upward social mobility in Asian societies (Kim,

1998; Zhou, 1998). In this context, educational systems overseas, particularly of Western English-speaking countries such as the United States, started to gain popularity for their high international standards, promises of English fluency, and access to world-accredited universities (Hom, 2002; Ihm & Choi, 2015; Zhou, 1998). Some parents also hold that the western education that their children receive is a status symbol for the family (Leung, 1998). Other reasons, especially among families in several Asian countries (e.g., Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea) included concerns for political uncertainty and compulsory military services (Kim, 1998; Tsang, Irving, Alaggia, Chau, & Benjamin, 2003; Zhou, 1998).

2.2. Early study abroad and transnational families

Because early study abroad students live separately from their parents across national borders, the families with early study abroad students are also known as a type of transnational family where family members live in different countries while maintaining their familial ties (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002). In the perspective of family migration, the decision for some of the families, usually the families with transnational business activities, to send their children to study abroad is also part of their planned immigration process (Lin, 1998; Orellana, Thorne, Chee, & Lam, 2001). This is opposite to the traditional stepwise family immigration because the children took the lead in the immigration, arriving and settling

themselves in the foreign country while their parents remained home and planned to join them later. For these parents, sending their children to study abroad is to prepare them with the language and culture in the host country first, before the parents are able to leave their business at home and to join their children later (Lin, 1998).

Another related transnational family structure is astronaut families from China, Taiwan, or Hong Kong, and goose families (*gireogi gah-jok*) from South Korea (Lee & Koo, 2006; Tsong & Liu, 2009). Unlike families who send their children to study abroad alone, in astronaut families and goose families, one parent (usually the mother) migrates with the children while the main provider of the household (usually the father) stays in the home country to work and sending the money to the family members abroad (Waters, 2002) Children of these families are termed as “satellite kids” (Waters, 2002). Although both satellite kids and unaccompanied early study abroad students are educational migrants, their experiences and challenges are found to be different (Bang, 2008; Okazaki, Saw, & Cho, 2015) and the satellite kids may experience role reversal with an increased responsibility and felt obligation to take care the present parent (Aye & Guerin, 2001; Cheng, 1998; Tsong & Liu, 2009). Because present study is to understand the youths’ relationships with parents and social figures in the physical separation with both parents, it focuses only on unaccompanied early study

abroad students and the term “early study abroad students” in this study applies only for students that are unaccompanied by both parents.

2.3. Adjustment of early study abroad students

In the context of physical separation from parents, the complexity of immigration and compounded by normative developmental issues, places the youths in a challenging situation. Far away from home at an early age, early study abroad students not only have to take care of themselves daily, but also navigate the changes from migration and relocation alone.

Meanwhile, as adolescents, they are challenged by many developmental changes accompanying their age such as identity formation (Erikson, 1994) and dynamics in parent-child relationship (Santrock, 2003). For adolescents, too many changes at a too early time, given their emotional and cognitive state, can be a considerably stressful experience (Simmons & Blyth, 1987). One of the frequently mentioned stressors to early study abroad students is acculturation. As new immigrants who relocate to a distant country and are exposed to a new culture, it is natural for the youths to experience cultural shocks upon their arrival, be overwhelmed by the foreign values and norms, and struggle between learning new cultures and maintaining their heritage culture (Marvin, Chun, & Organista, 2009). Studies on early study abroad students generally show that the level of acculturative stress is associated with greater depression and lower self-esteem (Bang, 2008; Kwon, 2010;

Lee & Qin, 2011; Lee, 2009). In particular, Lee's (2009) study on a group of Korean early study abroad students found that in the first three years of the migration, acculturative stress was one of the most significant predictors of the depression. In addition, homesickness and loneliness are commonly found among early study abroad students (Jo, 2007; Lee & Qin, 2011). Some studies also suggest that the experiences of transferring back and forth between two cultures were tied with difficulties in forming a solid identity (Lee, 2010; Tsang et al., 2003; Song, Yoon, Lee, & Kim, 2011). Moreover, a study on Korean early study abroad students suggested that they might be more likely to be targeted by school violence (Park & Park, 2013).

Comparative studies were also conducted on early study abroad students and other peer groups. Some comparative studies suggest that early study abroad students display higher levels of stress when compared to local peers, immigrant children who live with their family, or peers in the home country, and are relatively more active in delinquent behaviors than their immigrant counterparts (Cheng, 1998; Chiang-Hom, 2004; Chung, 1994; Yi & Kwon, 2010). For example, in Chung's (1994) study, she compared unaccompanied early study abroad students from Taiwan with accompanied immigrant peers from Taiwan and their American-born Chinese peers. The study found that the anxiety level and distress level of the early study abroad students were higher than peers from the other two comparison groups.

The stress of immigration and separation from parents inevitably raises scholarly concerns to the psychological well-beings of early study abroad students. Likewise, a number of studies have paid attention to various aspects of the students' adjustment, such as acculturation, school adjustment, delinquency (Bang, 2008; Cho, 2014; Kwon, 2010; Zhou, 1998). Studies have generally found that adjustment among early study abroad students is positively associated with their language and cultural competence (Bang, 2008; Okazaki et al., 2015; Zhou, 1998), personal attributes (such as self-control) (Kang, Kim, & Moon, 2010; Kwon, 2010; Zhou, 1998), initial willingness for studying abroad (Kim, 2014; Kim & Okazaki, 2013; Zhou, 1998), and problem-oriented coping (Cho, 2014). Take language and cultural competence for example, many studies have documented that language barrier is a main challenge for early study abroad students both in their school setting and in their daily life (Jo, 2007; Kim, 2014; Kim & Okazaki, 2013). Further, the experienced language barriers and cultural difference could make it more challenging for the youths to make new friends at school (Jo, 2007; Kim & Okazaki, 2013; Zhou, 1998). In line with these findings, a qualitative study of 31 Korean early study abroad students in the U.S. found that the psychological and social isolation is common among the adolescents in the study (Kim, 2014).

2.4. Early study abroad students' relationship with parents, peers, and other adult figures

Studies have found that early study abroad students have experienced many changes in their relationship with their parents (Lee, 2014; Kim & Okazaki, 2014; Song et al., 2011; Zhou, 1998). Further, parents' high expectations can also be an extra burden towards the youths and negatively impact the youths' relationship with their parents (Cho, 2011; Kim & Okazaki, 2014). In Kim and Okazaki's (2014) study, some students described that the expectations from their parents made their heart sink or feel guilty especially when they could not live up to those expectations. The feelings of guilty or anxiety then prevented some students contacting their parents. Studies have suggested that the communication became less frequent over time and there was a decrease of parental authority due to the physical distance and parents' lack of language proficiency and cultural literacy (Cho, 2011; Song et al., 2011; Zhou, 1998). But some students in Zhou's (1998) study also said that they enjoyed the freedom and control of their own life that they were given, which actually led to less disagreement and conflict between them and their parents. In a more recent study, Lee (2014) found that while mostly female students regretted the loss of intimacy from their parents, many male participants felt that their relationship with parents became better because the distance helped them to have less conflict with their parents than they used to. In the literature of

early study abroad students, the physical separation with parents are often perceived in a negative way regarding its effect on the youths' development and adjustment, for the decrease in parental control and supervision (Tsong & Liu, 2009; Zhou, 1998) and the positive role that parents could play in supporting the youths' adjustment is relatively underexplored.

In relation to early study abroad student's relationship with peers, research has shown that the early study abroad students had a relatively smaller social world (Kim, 2014; Zhou, 1998). Most of the early study abroad students do not have any established relationships upon their arrival (Hom, 2002). Moreover, the language barrier and cultural differences might become another challenge for them in making new friends. In addition, because most of them entered the new school in between grades, making friends with their schoolmates became much harder (Zhou, 1998). Research also suggested the importance of being part of a positive peer group. Studies found that while socializing with delinquent peers was a significant risk factor for the youths' adjustment particularly related to their delinquent behaviors, a positive peer group could be a strong protective factor for early study abroad students (Chiang-Hom, 2004; Zhou, 1998). Chiang-Hom (2004) also suggested that the positive in-group identity and a sense of ethnic solidarity could protect the youths against discrimination.

For the students who lived with a host family or the local guardian, their relationship with the host family also played a main part to their

adjustment in the host country. Early study abroad students' home-stay experience and relationships with their guardians are found to be associated with their sense of belonging, level of stress, and adaptation to new environment (Cho, 2011; Kang, Kim, & Moon, 2010; Kim, 2014; Kim & Okazaki, 2013; Lee, 2014; Popadiuk, 2009). Lee's (2014) study has shown that adapting to host families constituted one of the greatest stressors the youths. Similarly, Kim's (2014) study on Korean early study abroad students has found that the stressful relationship with local guardians was a major adjustment for the students. On the other hand, studies also show that having a positive relationship with the host family can largely facilitate the youths' adjustment in the host country (Cho, 2011; Kim & Okazaki, 2013; Popadiuk, 2009). For example, Kim and Okazaki's (2013) found that having a good relationship with the local guardian had great impact on the youths' cultural adjustment in positive ways. Further, Cho (2011) has found that having a supportive host mother filled the psychological vacancy experienced by the absence of one's own mother. It is noteworthy how people who are physically present in early study abroad students' daily life in the host country, such as their peers and host family, are of great importance to their adjustment (Cho, 2011; Jo, 2007; Kang et al., 2010; Kim, 2014; Kim & Okazaki, 2013; Lee, 2014; Popadiuk, 2009). However, the nature of these relationships and how they influence the youths' adjustment in the context of parental absence have barely been the focus of scholarly

investigation. Thus, it is underexplored as to what the nature of these relationships is and how they affect the adolescents' adjustment in this context.

2.5. The early study abroad students from South Korea

The phenomenon of Korean families sending their children to study abroad started from the early to mid-1990s and has witnessed a steep rise during the 2000s (Kang & Abelmann, 2015). Although families of the early study abroad students in the earlier years tended to be wealthier and more educated, with more options for destination now, it is now popularized across the larger spectrum of social classes (Ihm & Choi, 2015; Kim, 2015). Korea as one of the main origins of early study abroad students, followed by Taiwan and Hong Kong (Tsong & Liu, 2009), is unique regarding the purposes of early study abroad practices and the preferences of the destinations. While the commonly shared motivation for sending children abroad is to seek more opportunities for better education, the longing for English proficiency adds to the uniqueness of the early study abroad practices in Korea (Ong, 1999). As such, the decision to send children abroad is strongly driven by the parents' desire to provide their children an opportunity to learn English or other foreign languages, and to raise them with a global insight and competence (Ihm & Choi, 2015; Kang, 2015; Ong, 1999).

Because of this longing for English proficiency, the preferred destinations for Korean early study abroad students are no longer limited to English-speaking Western countries, such as the U.S. and Canada, but extended to anywhere where they can attain English skills. In this context, it is not surprising to see that there is a rise in the number of early study abroad students of going to the English-speaking countries in Southeast Asia, such as the Philippines and Singapore (Ihm & Choi, 2015; Kim, 2015; Park & Bae, 2015). Meanwhile, with the booming economy of China, the ability of speaking Chinese language is valued in Korea and thus, an increasing number of early study abroad students choose Chinese-speaking countries as their destination (Ihm & Choi, 2015; Wang, 2006).

It is also important to understand Korean early study abroad students and their parents with the characteristics of Korean parent-child relationship in mind. In Korean culture, parent-child relationship emphasizes on hierarchy, parents' authority, and children's duty to obey their parents (Ho, 1986; Uba, 1994). Influenced by Confucianism, Korean culture also emphasizes self-control and restraint. Thus, openly expressing affections and feelings between parents and child is not common (Uba, 1994). Studies show that Korean parents are less expressive both emotionally and physically with their children (Kim, 1997; Pyke, 2000). Instead of directly expressing their love to their children through words and physical affection, they demonstrate their love through actions, such as making sacrifices for

their children and providing instrumental support persistently (Chao, 1994; Kang & Shih, 2018; Uba, 1994). It then addresses the children's obligation towards their parents to repay the devotion and sacrifice that parents made (Uba, 1994). Studies have shown that Korean American young adults tend to interpret their relationship with parents (Kang & Larson, 2014; Kang & Shih, 2018). Additionally, Park (2005) found that the physical distance between Korean American college students and their parents helped them to see their parents' devotion and thus, perceived their parents in a more positive way. With these findings in mind, this study attempts to understand what the transnational distance would bring to the relationship between Korean adolescents and their parents.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1. Research Method: Interpretative phenomenological analysis

To understand the changes the youths experienced in their relationship with parents after the separation, the nature of their relationship with people around them, and how parents and other people respectively influenced their adjustment, interpretative phenomenological analysis was adopted as the principal methodology in this study. Interpretative phenomenological analysis attempts to explore how individuals make sense of their life experience (Smith & Osborn, 2007). The approach is phenomenological in that it is committed to examining participants' life world in great detail. It is concerned with individuals' personal experience and their perception towards a certain experience (Smith & Osborn, 2007). The approach is also an interpretative endeavor where the researcher tries to understand the participants' world by interpreting what is told by the participants (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

Interpretative phenomenological analysis involves an active process of sense-making by both the participant and the researcher, which asks for rich, detailed, first-hand accounts from the participants about the target phenomenon (Smith & Osborn, 2007). Semi-structured, face-to-face, one-on-one interview was used in this study to achieve richer data as it allows for a greater flexibility for the participants to tell their own stories and a

stronger role for them to determine how the interview goes. It also allows the researcher to probe, clarify freer when needed (Smith, & Osborn, 2007).

3.2. Data Collection

3.2.1. Criteria for Selecting Research Participants

The following five criteria were used to identify participants who are appropriate for this research purpose:

1. A participant is ethnically Korean and were born and raised up in Korea before he/she went to school in a foreign country.
2. A Participant moved to the foreign country before college.
3. A participant lived and attended school in a foreign country away from her/his parents for no less than three years.
4. The current age is between 18-29 years old.
5. A participant has returned to Korea for no longer than three years ago.

The first three criteria helped identify the target participants who experienced living and attending school in a foreign country at an early age without parents for a lengthy period of time. Moreover, the study focuses on stories told by adult returnees who have recently returned to Korea, as I believe that returnees who have experienced every stage from leaving to returning home, are more likely to have a full version of this experience and will enable us to see broader with the richness of data. To reduce the

difference in the participants' interpretation of their experience due to the different current age and length of returning, the statements regarding their age range and length of returning were added as the fourth and fifth criterion.

3.2.2. Recruitment

Participants were recruited after the study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of Seoul National University (IRB No. 1712/002-002). Purposive sampling and snowball sampling were used in recruiting eligible participants. Personal network, internet community, SNS, and posters were used in search of potential participants. By mid-April 2018, the announcement for recruiting research interviewees (Appendix 2 & 3) was posted on 92 online communities, including as Korean study abroad online forums and Facebook groups of Korean student association. In the third week of March 2018, recruiting posters (Appendix 3 & 4) were also put up among main campuses in Seoul area, including Seoul National University, Yonsei University, Korea University, Sogang University, Kyung Hee University, Chung-Ang University, Hongik University, Hankyong University of Foreign Studies, and Ewha Womans University. The posters were mainly put up on campus notice boards, student center, and international affairs buildings. The online posts and posters were composed in both English and Korean language, explaining the purpose of the study, the eligibility, the procedures, the compensation, the anonymity and their

right to reject and withdraw anytime, and providing information on how to sign up for the study.

By the end of April 2018, 11 individuals responded to the online posts and one responded to the offline poster. Among these respondents, only two were eligible to participate in this study. Ten of those who responded to the announcement were not eligible to participate because eight of them had yet to return to Korea, one intended to refer a friend who, through my follow-up contact with the referred friend, was found to have stayed abroad with one parent, and one was not Korean. I also received contact from nine individuals later who were referred to me through personal network. Among these nine individuals, two lived and attended school in the foreign country while their parents lived in another place within the same country, one was currently in her first year of studies abroad for the second time, after living in Korea for three years since the conclusion of her first study abroad experiences, one went abroad with family and stayed with family for the first four years, and one person did not respond to my follow-up contact. For the above reasons, only four out of these nine individuals are included in this study and reported here. I also kindly asked the respondents if he/she could refer potential participants. One participant was recruited through this route. In total, the interview data from seven participants (4 women and 3 men) were analyzed in this study.

3.2.3. Interviewing

The interview schedule was developed in advance. Guided by the research questions, the schedule covered the following topics: experience of being away from parents, relationship with parents, experience with significant others during the years abroad, negative experience with others, intimate relationships, and attitudes towards studying abroad at a young age (as supplementary questions). Under each topic area of interest, subsequent probing and follow-up questions were constructed (see Appendix 1). For example, about the relationship with significant others, questions such as, “How do you think he/she helped with your adjustment during your time abroad?”, "What were the strengths of this relationship?", and "If you met him/her in Korea when you were with your parents, would he/she be as important as he/she was?”, were asked.

Each interview opened with warming-up questions. By asking about when and how the interviewee left for studying abroad and returned to Korea, it brought both the researcher and the interviewee back to the contexts where they first decided to leave for studying abroad and where they decided to come back to Korea. After adequate depth and coverage of the topics was achieved, the interview closed by asking the interviewee whether he/she had anything else that needed to be discussed, and if he/she had any questions. Apart from the opening and closing questions, the interview did not strictly follow the sequence on the schedule, nor every

question was asked in order or exactly the same way. Consequently, the interviewee was allowed a strong role in determining how the interview proceeded.

The interviews were arranged at a time and place that were convenient to the interviewees. In total, seven interviews were conducted. The average length of the interviews was 106 minutes. Six interviews were conducted in café, and one was in a campus lounge. Prior to the interview, a printed information sheet and consent form (Appendix 5 & 6) were passed to the interviewee for signing on the day of the interview. Before the interview started, an orientation of the interview procedures, including the length, interview structure, and the use of voice recording, was provided to the interviewees. The interviewees were asked to use the language they felt comfortable in talking with me. Six of the interviewees used English as the primary language in the interview, mixing with some Korean phrases. One interviewee mainly used Korean during the interview, and some Chinese was referred to in order to clarify our understanding when needed. Under the interviewees' permission, all the interviews were voice recorded with a Sony Xperia Z2 mobile phone. The participants were compensated with 20,000 KRW in cash for their participation. No real names are included in this study, all the names used in this study are pseudonyms.

3.3. Participants

3.3.1. Demographic information of the participants

Table 1 provides a summary of participants' demographic information. The order of this list was based on the interviewees' current age.

Three males and four females are included in the study. Current age of the participants ranged from 24-29, and the average is 25. Six of the participants left their parents at the age of 15, and one participant left when he was 16. The length of their stay in the foreign country ranged from 5 to 14 years, with an average of 8 years. In terms of the years of returning, two participants returned to Korea in 2015, two participants returned to Korea in 2016, two participants returned to Korea in 2017. One participant, Vincent, returned to Korea in 2018, a few weeks prior to the time of interview. Five out of seven participants went to study abroad in U. S., one participants went to New Zealand and one participants studied abroad in China. One participants received a master's degree. Two participants were enrolled in graduate school in Korea. Among the rest of the participants, three of them have graduated from a four-year college/university, one of them is enrolled in a four-year university. At the time of interview, two participants were in graduate school and one participant was to continue his undergraduate education in the U. S. after just ending military service. The other four participants were in the midst of work related activities, with one working

full time, one doing internship and two in the midst of job search. In the host country, most of the participants have experienced various forms of living arrangement, including living with a host family, living in the school dormitory, house-sharing, and living alone. During their studies abroad, all the interviewees except Yujeong (whose family went into major financial trouble one year after her arrival), received adequate financial support from their parents, covering their tuition and daily expenses so that they did not have to work part-time for money. Among the seven participants, Roby, Ian, and Vincent have an older sibling who went to study abroad before them, and Yujeong went together to study abroad with her younger sibling. Currently, all the participants stay at home with their family except for Lydia who lives by herself.

Table 1 <i>Summary of participants' demographic information</i>										
Name (Pseudonym)	Gender	Current age (years)	Country of destination	Age of first-time arrival in the foreign country (years)	Length of stay in the foreign country (years)	Length of returning (years)	Living arrangement in the foreign country	Current place of residence	Education Status	Frequency of visiting Korea
1. Roby	M	23	U.S.	15	6	2	Homestay, Dormitory	Parents' home	Admitted to a 4- year university	High school: 1/yr College: 2/yr
2. Ian	M	24	New Zealand	15	6	3	House-sharing	Parents' home	3-year university graduate	High school: twice in total College: 1/yr
3. Yujeong	F	24	China	15	7	3	Dormitory, House-sharing	Parents' home	4-year college graduate	High school: none College: once per 1~1.5 yr
4. Mary	F	25	U.S.	15	3+2 (first 2 years of college in K)	1	Homestay, Dormitory, House-sharing	Parents' home	4-year university graduate	High school: once College: 2/yr
5. Lydia	F	25	U.S. (Canada for one year)	15	9	1	Homestay, Dormitory, Rental apartment	Live alone	4-year university graduate	High school: 2/yr College: 3 times in total

6.Vincent	M	25	U.S.	16	9	A few weeks	Homestay, Dormitory	Parents' home	4-year university graduate	Before college: 1/yr College: 2/yr
7.Kendy	F	29	U.S.	15	14	2	Dormitory, House-sharing	Parents' home	4-year university+ graduate school graduate	High school: 2/yr College and working: once every 1~2 yr

3.3.2. Participants' background profiles

The profile of each participant from leaving to returning home are provided here to help the readers gain an understanding of each participant.

Roby (23 years) went to the U.S. at an age of 15. He started his 8th grade in the middle school there and went to a high school in the same area. During middle school and high school years, he stayed with a host family where five more students were hosted. After graduating from high school, he moved to another state for college and lived in the school dorm. In 2016, he came back to Korea for the military service, after finishing his freshman year in college. At the time of interview, he has just finished his military service and was planning to go back to the U.S. to continue his school.

Roby was a very sporty young man who surprisingly has a shyly smile. He was proud of his love and master in a variety of sports. In fact, one reason that made him decide to leave Korean education system and made him persevere there while he was having a hard time in the United States was the great opportunities that he would be given to enjoy both sports and study in the United States. In Korea he would never get a chance to balance both sports and study in higher grades before college. Although Roby had a “very hard and lonely time” during that one year in middle school, he got to meet many other Korean study abroad students after he entered high school. When talking about his best friend, Ben (pseudonym), there was always a warm smile filling his eyes.

Ian (24 years) went to New Zealand for high school when he was 16. He stayed in New Zealand for 6 years for his high school and undergraduate education. For the first four years, he lived together with his older brother, who also studied abroad in New Zealand. After his brother left, he started to rent with other four friends. He came back to Korea after he graduated from college in 2015. He is now a graduate school student in Korea. Even though Ian's home is about two hours' subway ride away from his school, he commuted every day, because he really enjoys living at home and wants to spend more time with his parents after being abroad for such a long time.

Ian is a passionate young scholar who enjoy what he does and also show great openness and interest in knowledge of other fields such as my own. He has had a clear goal for his future since he was an adolescent. To become a fluent English speaker and a successful scholar in the future, Ian's original plan was to attend foreign language high school in Korea. But because the competition was very fierce and the whole process was so tiring, as he recalled, "I needed to wake up at six, and I always came back to my place around 2 am, studying full time, that was not reasonable for middle school students, and I was really tired of my life", he changed his mind to join his older brother in New Zealand. During the interview, he was open and generous in sharing his own experience and was very comfortable with talking about his feelings and thoughts. Even though he perceived himself as a success of studying abroad, he has shown his concerns towards the

practice of early study abroad and highlighted that not everyone would be that lucky to meet a group of supportive friends and having an older brother being there for him and understanding parents was just another bonus.

Towards the end of the interview, he asked me a lot of questions about my studies and kindly asked me if I could let him know about the findings after it is done.

Yujeong (24 years) went to China when she was 15 accompanied by mother and 3-year-younger brother. Her mother left after one year, and she spent the remaining five years and a half with her younger brother. She attended language training school for one semester, before entering a local middle school for 9th grade. After middle school, she moved to another city for a music-specialized high school. After finishing her 10th grade in high school, she took a qualification exam held by a local music academy and was admitted to college. After 4 years, she graduated from college and returned to Korea in 2015. She stayed with her mother and younger brother for the first six months. During the two years in middle school and high school, she lived in the school dorm. When she entered college, she and her brother moved to a rental apartment together. At the time of interview, she was in the process of job-haunting.

This was my second time meeting Yujeong. I first met her last year and interviewed her for a class project. We kept in touch since then and she was happy to help for another interview. Unlike other participants, being an

older sibling and taking care of her younger brother also played a big part of Yujeong's experience of studying abroad in China. Yujeong recalled that her brother was like a baggage for her to always carry with and take care of during the past seven years. When her family went into financial troubles, she took on part-time jobs to pay for not only herself but also her brother's daily expenses. Her sense of responsibility and her optimism during rainy days made her even more adorable.

Mary (25 years) went to the United States as an exchange student when she was 15 for high school. After one year of stay, she decided to study there as a full student, because she really enjoyed the relaxing atmosphere of learning, the peaceful countryside, and the care and support of her host family. Hence, she had her visa renewed and prolonged her stay in the United States for two more years. After she finished high school, she went back to Korea and attended her college in Korea for freshman and sophomore year. She then transferred to a college in the United States, and thus finished her junior and senior year of college there. She returned to Korea in 2017 after graduating from college. She is now a graduate school student in Korea.

Mary said her relationship with her mother was "very distant" even before she went to study abroad. She explained that because her father passed away when she was nine years old and her mother had to work, they did not get to spend much time with each other. She was upset towards her

mother's overcontrol but only found out herself as controlling as her mother. "Compulsive" and "consistency" were two keywords throughout the interview with Mary. Consistency was what Mary valued in any of her close relationships. By saying "consistency", she meant that constantly showing her the affection and always being there for her. She described herself as "compulsive" and explained with the following experience, "So back in middle school, I was really compulsive in studies, so I tried to memorize everything in book, although I tried really hard, I wasn't ever so happy with the results, coz I always expected more and more to perfectly memorize, so I was really absorbed to that bad cycle, and I became more cautious about the memorizing."

Lydia (24 years) first went to Canada and attended 9th grade there when she was 15. Right after finishing her 9th grade in Canada, she transferred to the United States and started her 10th grade at a boarding school. She stayed in the boarding school for one year and transferred to another high school, finishing her 11th and 12th grade. After high school, she went to college in the same area, and graduated from college last summer. She came back to Korea in 2017 right after her graduation. When she was in Canada, she stayed with a Canadian host family. After moving to the United States, she boarded at school for the first year, transferred to a new school and stayed with a Korean host family for the second year, and then moved to an American host family and stayed there for two years. After that, she

moved to live by herself till she came back. At the time of interview, she was doing her internship and was planning to go to graduate school in Korea.

Growing up, Lydia's passion was to become a surgeon. To pursue her dream, she told her parents that she wanted to study in the United States as she thought that she would attend medical school in the United States anyway and it would be better to go to study there earlier. However, it was only until the first year of college that she found out that as a non-citizen, she was not eligible to apply for medical school in the United States, which was a huge blow for her. She took one year off after her freshman year to try to accept it and to find out what to do next. She ended up studying another major which she gradually developed an interest in. As she said, "I realized it's not the end of world, there are things I would want to do, even though I couldn't be a surgeon in the United States anymore."

Vincent (25 years) went to the United States at the age of 16, starting his school year of 8th grade in middle school. After one year in the middle school and finishing 8th grade, he went to a high school in the same area. During the five years of middle school and high school, he had stayed with three different families. He was in a homestay family for one year and later moved to his local guardian's place and stayed there for three years. By the end of junior year in high school, his host family found a pipe in his drawer by accident and they reported to the police. Although it turned out to be a smoking pipe which was not illegal, he was told that he had to move

out. At this point, one of his friends offered him to stay in her place and he moved to live with her family and stayed for a year until he graduated from high school. After high school, he moved to another state for college and stayed in the school dorm for four years. He came back to Korea in 2018 after graduating from college. At the time of interview, he has just been back and was planning to get a job in Korea.

Vincent was a personable young man. From the way he dressed, it seemed that he was into fashion as well. When we first met in café, I offered to treat him with the drink, but he insisted on ordering himself. Besides his drink, he ordered a strawberry dessert for share. We had a good conversation and I was impressed by the close relationship he had with his mother. Because his father had worked overseas, and his brother left for studying abroad before he did, Vincent and his mother had spent relatively more time with each other and they got along very well. Towards the end of the interview, Vincent told me that he would leave for the U.S. soon next week for a concert, and to meet his high school friends.

Kendy (29 years) went to the U. S. when she was 15 for high school. She attended a boarding school in state A for two years and transferred to another boarding school in state B and finished her junior and senior year of high school there. After high school, she moved back to state A for college and finished her first two years in the college there. Later, she transferred to another college in state B and stayed there for three years, during which she

finished her undergraduate education. After college, Kendy moved to state C for graduate school and lived there for three years. She found her employment in state D after graduation, so she moved to state D and worked there for one year. She later received a job opportunity overseas and moved to work there for one year before she returned to Korea in 2016. At the time of interview, she was working in Korea.

Talking with Kendy felt like speaking to an older sister. She was well spoken, with a surprisingly calm but warm manner which quickly brought me into our conversation. After halfway of the interview, she disclosed that her father passed away when she was young, and her mother decided to send her to study abroad because she was afraid of the stereotype that Korean society had towards children who were without father and raised up by single mother. I was impressed by the positive attitude Kendy held towards issues that she had in life and always worked on them with solutions. At the time of interview, even though she was having a hard time to adjust to Korean society after she returned to Korea, she still tried to adjust to Korean society and embrace Korea as part of her background. She said, “No matter how long I lived abroad and how much I traveled, I am Korean. It’s the fact. Even though sometimes I want to go back to the United States or I don’t want to live in Korea, I should keep in mind that I am a Korean, otherwise I can’t really adjust. I have to accept that and try to live a life in Korea.”

3.4. Data Analysis

Guidelines recommended by Smith and Osborn (2007) were followed throughout data analysis. The interview recordings were transcribed verbatim, retaining the repetitions, pauses, and significant non-verbal expressions. The verbatim transcript of each interview was saved separately as locked word file. The process of coding was conducted on the word file on the personal computer. Each transcript was closely read numerous times. While reading, I highlighted, underlined, font-colored the text to assist my reading and understanding. During each time of reading, notes and comments towards certain words, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs were taken down as inserted-comments on the word file which were on the right-hand margin with dotted lines linking to the corresponding part. The notes and comments included summaries of the text, paraphrases or extracts of the interviewee's own accounts, my thoughts and preliminary interpretations. At this stage of reading, I wrote down whatever came to mind.

After the transcript was thoroughly read and coded, all the initial notes were copied and pasted to a new word file for further examination. At this point, as suggested by Smith and Osborn (2007), I focused on reading these notes, with an attempt to capture the essence of the notes and describe them with concise phrases and these phrases were the initial themes. I then

listed these initial themes in a new file. At this stage, I tried to find connections among them and to cluster them. I gave each cluster a tentative name. The initial themes that did not belong to any clusters were moved to the end of the file and the themes that were irrelevant to the research questions were discarded. By the end of clustering, I checked the clusters of themes against the transcript. To better review, I created a two-column table where the themes were put on the right-hand column, and the corresponding extracts of the transcript were put into the left-hand column.

After each interview was analyzed individually through the above procedures, all the seven interviews were analyzed together. I first examined the themes that had yet been categorized to see if they would fit into any generated clusters across the interviews and if some of them could be categorized together to become a new cluster. Next, all the clusters of themes were carefully reviewed with an attempt to identify patterns, connections, or inconsistency across the different interviews. It also involved breaking down the clusters and re-clustering the themes, and merging the similar themes together. Table 2 presents the themes generated/emerged from the data analysis.

<i>Table 2 Master table of themes</i>	
1. Mixed feeling	1.1. Growing appreciation
towards parents'	1.2. Motivation and pressure from parents

sacrifice	
2. From physical distance to the distance of heart	2.1. Not sharing difficulties for the greater good
	2.2. Those who felt distant
	2.3. The odds of staying close to one's parents
	2.4. Broken relationship with parents that are hard to mend
3. Supplementary parental roles: new relationships with peers and adults	3.1. Peers who knew the environment better than the parents
	3.2. Influential adults in the host country
4. Beyond just companionship: Accompaniment, relatedness, and a sense of belonging	

Chapter 4: Results

Four main themes were emerged: a) Mixed feeling towards parents' sacrifice, b) From physical distance to the distance of heart, c) Supplementary parental roles: new relationships with peers and adults, and d) Beyond just companionship: Accompaniment, relatedness, and a sense of belonging. Findings show that while peers and other adult figures partly supplemented the role of parents by providing guidance, support and control in the context of parents' physical absence, parents could still be a powerful source of support for the participants even in the context of overseas separation.

It was found that the recognition of parents' sacrifice and growing appreciation towards parents had both positive and negative impact on the participants' adjustment and their relationship with their parents. The findings also suggest that the support from parents could still be a powerful source of support, even while physically separated. Although five out of seven participants related that they communicated less with their parents over time, two participants maintained a great extent of sharing due to the receptiveness and openness of their parents, and still keep a close relationship with their parents, despite the distance. Lastly, peers and other adult figures could partly supplement the role of parents by giving guidance, support and control. It is suggested that a balance of guidance and control from other adult figures, and the accompaniment, sense of relatedness and

belonging from positive peer relationships, eased the youths' adjustment in the absence of parents.

Table 2 <i>Master table of themes</i>	
1. Mixed feeling towards parents' sacrifice	1.1. Growing appreciation
	1.2. Motivation and pressure from parents
2. From physical distance to the distance of heart	2.1. Not sharing difficulties for the greater good
	2.2. Those who felt distant
	2.3. The odds of staying close to one's parents
	2.4. Broken relationship with parents that are hard to mend
3. Supplementary parental roles: new relationships with peers and adults	3.1. Peers who knew the environment better than the parents
	3.2. Influential adults in the host country
4. Beyond just companionship: Accompaniment, relatedness, and a sense of belonging	

4.1. Mixed feelings towards parents' sacrifice

Over the years that they stayed apart, most of the participants grew to appreciate their parents and parents' support and sacrifice. The absence of their parents made participants realize the difficulty of things that were previously done by their parents and the protection that parents provided to them. This gap made participants grew appreciative of their parents and their sacrifices. The sense of gratitude towards their parents and their sacrifice however, had positive but also negative impact on the participants. It motivated them to work harder but also adds on to the mental pressure of these youths due to the feeling of indebtedness. It became a situation where the participants felt that as a result of their parents' sacrifices, they must work hard and do better in their studies. This also brought about the negative effect of participants hiding negative issues from their parents in order to not disappoint them and waste their sacrifice.

4.1.1. Growing appreciation

Six participants in this study related that they started to "see the value of family" and realized their parents' love and sacrifice, which they had not noticed or understood in the past. After they left home in Korea and started living abroad on their own, many came to realize that even the small things which they used to take for granted was not insignificant. They failed to recognize this prior to study abroad when they were still in Korea because

their parents protected them from facing the harsh realities of life. However, after they left Korea, learning to do things that their parents used to do for them, having to experience what they were prevented from before, and the huge gap and contradiction between the life they used to have in Korea and the life alone in the foreign country made them realize how precious was that selfless care and love from parents. As Lydia said:

When I was in Korea, I didn't know when bad things happened, there's no one to help me, because my parents were always there, whenever I needed, even before I asked them, they always did everything for me. In the United States, nothing, nothing! I had to do everything on my own, and I realized how important, how thankful that was.

At different points of time, in different ways, the participants came to realize their parents' sacrifice and understand their way of love. For some, this realization, along with gratefulness came right after their relocation when they were challenged by daily chores, such as doing their own laundry. For others, it came later when the exciting taste of freedom faded away and one started to "realize the preciousness of mom". Yujeong also shared how "parenting" her little brother enabled her to understand her mother's actions and words in the past and to reread them in the lens of love and appreciation. As she recalled:

(Korean) 엄마랑 같이 살면서 했던 잔잔소리들 똑같이 동생한테 하고 있더라고요. 진짜 신기한 게 그말까지 똑같이, ‘아 엄마가 이런 마음으로 나한테 그렇게 얘기했구나’.엄마를 좀 이해하게 된 거죠. 엄마가 날 사랑하는구나, 엄마도 날 이렇게,,,혼나는 얘기가 아니라, 그때는 몰랐죠, 근데 좀 시간이 지나면서 알게 된 것 같아요

(English) I found I was nagging to my brother just as my mom did to me when I lived with her. It was so unbelievable that even the words we used were surprisingly the same. “Ah mom told me like that with the heart of [love]” so I came to understand my mom better. [I realized that] she does love me, and those words were not scolding. At that time, I didn’t know that, but I guess as time passed, I came to realize that.

Just like Yujeong, four other participants also said that they became more observant of parents’ love and their sacrifice for their success over time. Perhaps as they grew older and experienced more, they were more observant of what they had ignored before. For example, Kendy recalled that her mother would prepare small side dishes for her every time she came back to visit Korea, and it took her some time to take it as her mother’s way of supporting her. She regretted, “at that time, I didn’t really appreciate it”. For Ian, after he entered university, his source of gratitude towards parents

expanded from the housework that his parents used to do for him to their financial sacrifice in supporting him with his studying abroad. Ian explained:

When I went to university, I realized how much of the tuition that they paid, and, you know, normally international students' tuition is much more expensive. Since I became an adult and became a university student, I realized how tough to get some money, like extra income from my work, I realized how tough they are, I also started to think about, the amount of time they spent on their working as well. But, during high school, mostly the housework and labors, during university, also the financial stuff.

Although the gratitude for parents' financial sacrifice was a commonly shared feeling among most participants, one participant, Vincent, also highlighted the gratefulness which he felt he owed his mom for the choice she made for his benefit and for sacrificing her own wish of reunion with him. Vincent said:

Hm, err, even though I wanted to come back to Korea after middle school, she, she sounded that she wanted me back home, but she didn't let me, and she just guided me to the right direction. And then thinking back, I think she's very (becoming emotional), she just made the right choice (silence).

4.1.2. Motivation and pressure from parents

In whichever ways the participants came to realize their parents' love and sacrifice, knowing parents' sacrifice, especially the financial sacrifice, could both be a motivation and a burden. It motivated them to work hard either with schoolwork or in an attempt to relieve parents' financial burden by doing part-time jobs. Yujeong recalled the period where her family went through financial hardship. She said:

(Korean)그니까, 아빠가 돈이 없어서 엄마가 한국에 가 가지고 돈을 버는데, 엄마가 힘들게 벌어서 그돈을 저희에게 투자한 거죠. 엄마가 한국에서는 좀 힘들게 살았었어요. 그런 엄마를 보니까, 당연히 자식들 마음이 아프잖아요. 그래서 저도 대학교 다니면서 내내 계속 일 했던거고...

(English) Because my dad didn't have the money, my mom went back to Korea to work for money. She worked hard to save money and invested it on us. She was living a hard life in Korea. Seeing my mom [like that] just broke my heart, that's why I had been working part-time jobs throughout all my college years.

On the other hand, understanding parental sacrifice led to a certain extent of pressure because they did not want to let their parents down and

felt strongly that they should not do that. Kendy shared her experience of feeling both the motivation and the burden at the same time:

Kendy: ...the decision that she sent me to the United States, it's very devoted, because at that time, her business is not stable at that time, she had to save money rather than buying her own stuffs, she sent the tuition for my schools...the thing that I studied hard, put up myself, was because of my mom.

Researcher: Because you don't want to let her down?

Kendy: Yeah, in some ways, in other perspectives, she has really high expectation for me, so I had to meet the bottoms of her expectation. At the time, it was the motivation but at the same time, it was over burden.

Kendy mentioned the high expectations her mother had of her, which also partly contributed to her source of pressure. Ian also felt pressured even though his parents were relaxed about the grades and had never pressured him for studies. When he did not do well at school, he was worried and felt that he should not tell his parents about this to frustrate them.

Ian: Ah, also bad thing was my bad grades during high school, especially some of my science, and English,

coz, I couldn't understand, what they are talking about, properly, but, if my parents knew that, I'm doing kind of bad, in high school, they would feel kind of frustrated, so I didn't tell these kinds of things to my parents.

Researcher: And, did they check about your grades?

Ian: Actually, they didn't. They didn't care it at all, they still don't check my grades at all,

Researcher: Even, before you went abroad, they still didn't check?

Ian: No, not really, they're not typical Asian parents. Of course, they love it when I get a good grade, but they didn't really give me any pressure on my studies.

They are unreasonable parents (laugh)

Seemingly, it was not just about the expectation from parents, but also the youths' own aspiration and sense of obligation to do well. Four out of seven participants held the mentality that their parents had invested a lot on themselves and hence, they needed to do well and not worry nor frustrate them, which also potentially prevented them from opening up to their parents when they were having a hard time. When talking about some difficulties that they chose to conceal from parents, both Ian and Roby

related to the feeling of guilt towards their parents as they felt that their parents had already paid a lot and they should not fail the school or think about giving up and coming back to Korea. This will be discussed in further detail in the following theme: Not sharing difficulties for the greater good.

4.2. From physical distance to the distance of heart

Five out of seven participants related that the extent of sharing with their parents decreased over time. The participants chose to conceal their difficulties from their parents as they did not want to worry their parents. Further, as the parents were not able to resolve their problems, some thought that it was unnecessary to tell parents about their struggles. Two of the female participants struggled with making their own decisions without parental guidance. For them, not being able to receive needed help and guidance from parents and a decreased sharing of daily life seemed to have had a greater impact on the female participants' emotions and their relationship with parents. Nevertheless, two male participants with parents who were good listeners stayed close with their parent(s) regardless of the years of separation. On the other hand, because of the distance there were fewer chances for the participants to solve the problems they already have had in their relationship with parents and this was descriptive in parent-child relationships that were already falling apart.

4.2.1. Not sharing difficulties for the greater good

Five out of seven participants said that the openness and extent of sharing in their conversations with parents decreased over time and the lesser sharing made them feel somewhat distanced from their parents. Things that the participants tried to hide from parents were usually “bad things” or “deep problems”, namely, the difficulties or struggles they were going through. The main reason that the participants chose not to share “bad things” with parents was to protect their parents’ feelings, not to make them feel bad, worried, and/or frustrated. Ian explained, “Because I knew how my parents would feel-their children are away from them, but they’re having a hard time, [and] they can’t really go and meet them. So, I think I only talked about good stuffs, not bad things”. Roby, who suffered from loneliness and had a hard time in middle school, said that even though it was during that period that he called his parents most frequently, he lied about his situation to not make his parents worry:

I was worried about my parents, I worried my parents to worry about me, so I always said, “it’s ok, it’s really fun. I’m doing the schoolwork, [and it’s] really good in [Place]”. I don’t know. I lied (lower his head).

Similar to Roby, Lydia said that she would only slightly mention her problems in a light-hearted manner as if it were not something serious. She

said, “Even though it almost killed me, I say ‘Oh, just a little bit,’ or ‘Well, it was difficult, but it wasn’t that bad’.” Lydia also held that it was unnecessary to tell parents about the problems she had. She believed telling parents would not solve the problems but only add to their worries. She said:

I always thought that that would only make them worry, I mean I don’t want to say this, but, there’s literally nothing that they could do for me, because they were in Korea, and I was in the U.S., the only thing they could do is that just, listen to me, send me money, that’s pretty much it.

It appears that the participants’ gratitude and recognition of parents’ sacrifice were also part of the reason that they chose not to tell parents about their problems. As Lydia later added, “They already did a lot of things, already paying a lot, already had a lot of burdens on their shoulders, I didn’t want to add any more.”

Two of the participants, Lydia and Roby, also believed that telling parents about their problems might make the situation “worse”. Roby explained that because he had already felt his mother’s worries and anxiety about their separation, he thought that telling her about his problems could make her worry more and become overanxious that she might keep calling him and checking in. He explained that it would in turn add to his own stress. Roby elaborated:

I couldn't really talk about deep problems with my parents. I couldn't, say, like, I got one C in my whole high school years, but I was afraid to tell my parents, especially my mom, not [afraid of her] scolding, but then [that] she would be anxious, and keep calling me, which would make my grades even worse.

Interestingly, both Lydia and Roby, who believed that telling parents their problems could make it "worse", were also reluctant to talk to their parents about their romantic relationships. Lydia believed that telling parents about her relationships would make her parents "wonder, worry and misunderstand", because they could not meet her boyfriend even if they wanted to. She also imagined and mimicked her father's reaction to her having a boyfriend, "What! You have a boyfriend?! No way! You're my girl! You shouldn't have a boyfriend! Who's that boy!? I'm gonna kill him!" Similar to this sort of overprotectiveness that Lydia perceived from her father, Roby's mother was excessively intrusive towards his romantic relationship which made him stop telling his mother about the relationship.

High school, I told my mom I had a girlfriend. She didn't ask me much at first, but then as time passed, she started asking me what's her name, how is she, later on, she's like, get a girlfriend after you get into college. That was kind of stressful. After that, I decided not to tell my parents. Just talk to my friends

4.2.2. Those who felt distant

Because of the physical distance and the participants' tendency of not sharing about the "bad things", parents often did not know what their child went through. In addition, because the whole concept of studying abroad as well as the culture in the host country was something new to the parents, parents were less able to provide the needed guidance to their child. Although all participants have mentioned that their parents were not and would not be able to fully understand their situation and provide them the needed guidance, especially about the challenges they encountered in the education system, two of the female participants described this experience with more emotions. For example, Roby, one of the male participants, he recalled that he "relied more on friends than parents" during high school years, as he knew that his parents would not be able to guide him through things, such as college applications or to relate to his problems, such as conflicts he had with host families. Roby said almost immediately, "Because my parents had never stayed abroad". Similar to Roby, Vincent recalled with a light laugh that his family would just say "hwaiting (cheer up)" as they had little idea of the school subjects he was talking about. It seems that they resigned themselves to the fact that their parents did not know how things worked there and were unable to guide them in some parts of their journey. Both Roby and Vincent even sounded even a bit proud that they made it anyway. Roby proudly said, "I became more independent, I

know how to do my laundry, I know how to cook, I rely more on myself to decide stuffs.”

Unlike these male participants who seemed to care less about the lack of their parents’ guidance in their accounts, two female participants said that having to do everything on their own at a young age was actually quite challenging. One of the female participants, Kendy, opened up about her struggles of having to make decisions on her own as a teenager and her wishes of receiving advice from her mother. Kendy explained:

I had to make my own decision every time. Discussing the decision with my mom is not, likely to happen, because it’s really hard to discuss. She didn’t really know that situation well, so I should be the one making the decision, but it could be better if she gave me some advice.

It seemed that not being able to receive needed help and guidance from parents played a bigger part in Kendy’s adjustment and also brought her emotions which she thought deserves more recognition. Kendy said, “my family just had the assumptions that hmm, I’m fortunate, which is true. But there’re a lot of difficulties that they can’t even think of, like being in the country, I have to walk instead of [taking the transportation], they didn’t really think about.”

In addition to the concealing of “bad things”, there was also a decrease of sharing about their daily life with parents among many participants except Ian and Vincent. Besides the time differences, the lack of involvement in each other’s daily life and parents’ lack of knowledge about the host country, made it harder to talk to their parents about even the trivial mundane things, such as the places they went, the friends they newly met, and the English expressions that they first learned. Roby, who said that there was almost nothing else to talk about except how everything was, ended up having only a two-minute call with his parents once in a few weeks when he was in the United States. However, ever since he returned home to Korea, he caught up with his parents pretty quickly.

Cause we didn’t have much time to talk to each other, through the phone, but nowadays, we can talk about, the hakwon I’m going to, what I’m gonna do in college, internships, something like that, we have lots of topics. And then, if you meet each other in the house, we can just talk. We can watch TV together, we watch movies, dramas together, especially with my mom.

Compared to Roby’s smooth reconnection with his parents, the decreased communication about the daily life seems to have more influence on the Kendy and Lydia’s relationship with their parents. For them, the pieces that they did not share with parents added up, which gradually made

them feel distanced from their parents for a long time even after they returned to Korea. It also seems that their parents' lack of knowledge about the environment they lived in, particularly on the culture that they were socialized by, also contributed to a big part of the accumulated misunderstanding. Lydia articulated:

...Just things that are taken for granted in Korea, that not exist in the United States, so they just don't understand, why I'm different, how I'm different. I think they kind of fix or frozen, the image of me, when I was 15 when I was in Korea. 10 years has passed, I'm really different from I was 10 years ago. And they still expect me to behave like when I was 10 years ago, not in a way like a kid, but like them. I'm like, no. or like, I'm your parents, don't say bad things about me, I'm like, why. (laugh) I mean I'm from that culture, and that background, but 10 years has passed, my priority changed, my thoughts changed, and my friends are different, they don't behave like typical Korean, and I'm also very influenced by their behavior, them. But my parents don't understand this. ...I understand why they behave in that way, I just can't take it.

Although they both felt that their parents did not understand them as an individual, neither of them expanded on their feeling of not being understood to anything more. They both showed their understanding

towards their parents' misunderstanding, as they were able to see where their parents' lack of understanding came from, either from the long period of living apart or from their lacking knowledge of culture. Lydia further explained:

I don't really think that's particularly bad, coz it's not something wrong. They just don't know that. It's not that they want to hurt me, and they want to do something bad to me. It's just that they don't know, and they're already old, and I can't just change it. Same as I can't ignore my 10 years, I can't ignore their 50 plus years' experience in Korea. So, even though sometimes they force me to do wrong tradition, I can understand why.

4.2.3. The odds of staying close to one's parents

Two male participants, Ian and Vincent, who had parents that were open to listening and sharing, stayed close with their parent(s) regardless of the years of separation. Although they excluded many of their negative experiences from their conversation with parents, they shared their daily life with parents to a great extent. Both Ian with his parents and Vincent with his mother had had a very close relationship before they went to study abroad and even now they seem to enjoy talking with their parent(s) whether being together or apart. Vincent also added that his mother was the only one

whom he felt could fully rely on, as she understood him more than anyone, even more than his Korean friends in Korea.

She was the only person that I could rely on, even though we're really far... Coz, with my Korean friends, I was the only person who went abroad, so I can't really talk to my Korean friends, coz they don't understand what I was going through. Even though they were listening to me, they don't really understand my problem. But my mom, she knew how to listen, what to say to me.

Ian also related that his parents always try to understand him. Even with things that they did not know well, Ian's parents were patient listeners and open to learn. Because his parents showed their interest in whatever he was to share, paying attention and being responsive to what he shared, Ian also made efforts to explain to his parents about things that were foreign to them. During the time they lived apart, Ian said talking to his parents on the phone was one of his favorite times and thinking back, he really appreciated how his parents listened to him and tried their best to understand. Ian said:

I think, the listening attitudes of my parents were quite impressive, because, you know, their child is talking about something that they don't really understand, but they still listen carefully on that issue, and they tried to give responses as many as they can.

Their quality communication was also based on reciprocal sharing. Unlike parents who always asked their child the same questions or parents who thought it was unnecessary to take the time to share about their own life in Korea, Ian's parents and Vincent's mother also talked about their life in Korea through the phone, such as what they did, what they had for meal, or what happened to them and other relatives. In this way, Ian and Vincent also felt that they were involved in the everyday lives of their parents and the whole family in Korea. Otherwise, as in Lydia's case, she felt distanced and like an outsider when she found out that everyone else knew about her sister's entrance exam score except for her.

Vincent maintained frequent calls with his mother and his mother was also very sensitive to his emotions through his voice. If she sensed that Vincent might be having a bad day, she would ask if things were going well and if he would like to talk about what he was going through. So Vincent actually got to share "bad things" and his problems to his mother even though he initially planned not to. Even after he returned to Korea, the habit of talking with his mother on the phone remains part of his everyday life as his mother now works in another city and comes home once every few days. This strong connection with his mother also protected Vincent from delinquency. Vincent said that he saw some other kids doing illegal stuffs, and the reason that he chose not to join them was his mom. There was a time his host family found he had a pipe and they reported to the police. He

was called there and later he had to move out of the host family. When he moved out, he received a call from his mom who was crying. He stated that was the moment when he knew that he would never do things that would break his mother's heart again. Vincent said, "After I heard my mom crying and I knew I shouldn't be doing that."

4.2.4. Relationships with parents became hard to mend once broken

Because of the distance, there were fewer chances for them to solve the problems in their relationship with parents. Once the misunderstanding or mistrust was built, it was harder for both the parent and the participants to get through it as mending the conflict usually requires big and small communications and constant efforts. It was certainly not easy in the context of physical separation.

Two participants, Mary and Yujeong, shared their story of breaking relationship with their parent. Mary, whose relationship with her mother "had not always been close", described her relationship with her mother as the circle of repair and rupture during these years. They got along at a superficial level without really trying to thoroughly communicate and to solve the causes for their conflicts. The conflicts she had with her mother mainly came from her mother's over controlling treatment that she experienced every time she came back to Korea for holidays. During college years, not being able to feel her mother's empathy about what she was going

through further worsened their relationship, which almost stopped Mary from calling her mother. Although they had many conflicts and both Mary and her mother were aware of their bad relationship, they kept postponing to solve the problems due to their situation. Mary explained:

If we had to stay tight, maybe we'd try to solve the unspoken conflicts, because we had to live together. But coz we didn't have to, we keep postponing the resolution. We didn't do it, coz we knew it's gonna be stressful and time-consuming, and we can just tell it's not gonna be easy. And then I studied abroad for three years and then two years, so because of the time that we're apart, it wasn't so [inaudible], so we neglected it, always thought, "maybe next time when she comes back". And then again, I was out, so postponed it again. We keep postponing, because we got used to it.

For Yujeong, who used to have a very close relationship with her father, her relationship with her father went through a dramatic change after her father failed his business and did not actively solve the family's financial problem but kept investing in the business of his own interest. Yujeong blamed her father for putting the family into financial trouble. Moreover, because Yujeong did not see any sacrifice her father made when it was needed, she inclined to perceive him as unloving, irresponsible, and untrustworthy. Due to the distance and the lack of close daily contact, it was

hard for Yujeong to fully understand the situation and her dad's decision and it almost broke her relationship with dad, no matter how good it was before she went abroad.

(Korean) 제가 유학하면서 아빠랑 관계가 깨진 거 맞는 거 같아요, 유학하면서, 유학가기 전에 아빠랑 친했어요. 근데 아빠랑 대화 할 기회가 거의 7년 동안 없었잖아요. 그러다 보니까 계속 대화를 했더라면은 아빠가 이렇게 똑 같이 행동을 해서도 아빠를 이해 하거나 그럴 수도 있을 텐데 거의 그런 거 없이 계속 결과만 이렇게 보니까 아빠를 이해하기가 좀, 힘들어.

(English) It is fair to say that my relationship with my dad was broken while I was studying abroad. I was quite close with my dad before I went to study abroad. But during that 7 years, I almost had no chance to really talk with my dad. If I got to keep talking with him, I might be able to understand him, even if he did the same things. However, with little communication, all I saw was the fact (that he was not able to provide us) and it was really hard, for me to, understand him.

4.3. Supplementary parental roles: new relationships with peers and adults

In the context of physical distance from parents, people around the youths who provided the guidance, control and support that they were not able to receive from their parents partly supplemented the role of parents. Those could be adults around them as well as their peers who were physically with them and could provide them guidance and assistance which their parents could not due to the distance. However, not all relationships were supplementary or even positive. Three participants who lived with rude or business-like host families related that their host family was an additional stressor that they had to make adjustments to.

4.3.1. Peers who knew the environment better than the parents

What the participants faced when they first arrived in the host country was a totally foreign environment with only few people they knew. They were faced with many new challenges that they had never faced before and did not know how to deal with such as discrimination, different cultures and bureaucracy. Because the participants were on their own now, direct help from parents was unavailable. In addition, as their parents in Korea did not seem to know much about how to deal with these challenges either, helpful guidance was unlikely to be expected from their parents. At the point right after their arrival, guidance and help greatly facilitate their

adjustment to the new environment. Usually these people were other Korean study abroad students who had arrived earlier. Although all participants received various forms of support from their friends at different points of time, Ian was the only one who was lucky to meet a group of warmhearted Korean students at the very beginning upon his arrival. In his words, “It was my first day of my high school, and they, very naturally, approached me, and they dragged me into their group. “

Ian recalled that facing racism and being made fun of in school were the hardest experiences when he first arrived in New Zealand as an early study abroad student. He addressed that it was his friends who not only guided him on what to do, but also talked to the teacher about his situations. These friends provided not only the practical advice on what he should do, like “first to learn English as soon as possible”, but also told him about the culture, the discrimination that a new comer could potentially face, and how to properly respond to racism. Ian said:

[They told me], “Do not get depressed on those kinds of stuff, coz they do this kinds of discriminant stuffs to see your depression, so,, don’t get depressed. Show [them] who you are by becoming very confident, they will not be interested in bullying you.” So, they told me to just be as much confident as I can.

Encouraging words and guidance from his new friends were what Ian desperately needed at that time. It was a great relief to Ian. Although it took him some time to navigate through the whole situation, he was able to immediately have a new perspective his perspective on the “bad things” that happened to him.

4.3.2. Influential adults in the host country

The adults that were newly introduced into the participants’ life in the host country were people from church, their local guardians, or the host parents. Participants reported that these adults also greatly influenced their adjustment. The positive influence from adult figures was usually a good combination of adequate support and proper regulation. Yujeong explained the kind of support that she received from the church:

(Korean) 교회 안에서 할 수 있는 게 도와주고, 받은 스트레스를 술로 해결하지 않고 잘 해결할 수 있게 도와주고.

(English) Within the church, they helped me with whatever they could. They helped me so that I could solve my problems instead of trying to drink my stress/troubles away.

Yujeong also highlighted that it was the atmosphere of the church and the disciplines that she acquired through attending church that protected her from hanging out with wrong people and delinquency.

(Korean)그런 애들이 분명히 많거든요. 진짜 많아요. 저는 그냥 불편하고..교회 다니는 게 저한테 가장 컸어요. 제 주위에 그런 사람이 없었고 교회 다니면서 그런 행동을 하면 안 된다고 생각하게 제일 컸던 거 같아요. 왜냐면 교회 다니는 일요일에 사람들이 되게 깨끗한 척하고 막 그러는데 거기가서 맨날 술 마시고 이상한 짓 하고, 그러면은 이중적이니까 그냥 그렇게 하면 안 된다고 생각을 하는 거죠

(English) There were actually a lot of kids like that, really a lot. I just feel uncomfortable...I think attending church played a big role. I didn't be with those kids and the thought that it was inappropriate to behave in that way might have been the biggest reason. Because every Sunday, you went to church, well dressed, as if you were really neat. But if you were actually drinking every day and doing other weird things, that would be double-faced, and I don't think that's right.

Mary recurred that the support and disciplines from her host family was the biggest reason that steered her away from “weird peer groups”:

In high school, the biggest reason was the host family. Because they were very consistent in giving me limits, and house chores and rules, and because they gave me consistent support, I didn't have to seek out for, intimacy from some other weird peer groups.

Moreover, the genuine care and constant support she received from her host family and the connection she built with her host parents to some extent compensated for the frustration she received from the tension in her relationship with her mother. She also said that it was a relief to finally have some adult role models, especially a male role model, the host father, in her life. Because growing up, she did not have any male figures since her father passed away when she was really young, and she was raised by her single mother.

Three other participants-Lydia, Vincent, and Roby-who also stayed with host families shared a different side of living with a host family. For them, their host family was an additional stressor that they had to make adjustments to. In contrast to Mary's positive experience with her host family, Lydia had first stayed with a Korean immigrant family who treated her rudely and never helped her when she needed help. Lydia elaborated:

They were yelling at me for nothing, I didn't know why they're mad, they were just yelling at me. They always threaten me, saying that, "I'm just gonna kick you out so your visa will be canceled and

you're gonna be sent back to Korea, and your life is ruined." They always said that to me, and they charged me 1000 dollars for nothing, it was crazy it was crazy, so I changed my host family [one year later].

Although she managed to move to another host family with the help of her friend, this one-year suffering seemed to have left profound impact and wound on her which might take a long time to recover from. She had health problems after that one year of stay and suffered from insomnia for many years. Because she could not do anything about this, and she did not tell her parents to worry them, the only thing she could do was "not to think about that too much". She explained that thinking about that would only make her feel miserable and she also had no time to waste on thinking and crying during daytime because there were so many things that she had to handle by herself.

I just tried not to think about too much, because that will just make me feel miserable. I just kind of avoided, everything, during the day, I tried not to think about it, and at night, I thought about, how bitches, the host family were, being to me, how mean they were, maybe cry over night. But that was after I finished my work, before that, I tried not to think about it, or I will not be able to manage anything. That's kind of my, habit, my lifestyle.

Lydia also believed that this habit of holding her emotions back and attending to them later really affected her romantic relationships. She explained, “Cause if I pushed it back, it will roll like a snowball and makes a bigger problem.”

Roby’s host family and the second family that Vincent stayed for three years with were similar to dorm or hostel. There were rules and routines to follow, but there was no meaningful communication between them and the host family. As paid guardians, the host parents did their job to make them adjust and regulate them on behalf of their parents. It worked okay in the beginning, but as Roby and Ian became older, around junior years, they started to have more conflicts with the host parents. Both Roby and Vincent expressed that they wanted more freedom, such as more time to spend with their friends instead of having to be home by certain time. Also, both of them wished that they could have been given more privacy, such as being able to lock their door instead of being checked anytime. Their needs were common for adolescents, but they did not communicate their needs with their host parents because it was not like living with their own parents. Vincent explained that he did not think negotiating with them would work, as they seldom listened to his needs and he had to follow their routines. In his junior year, Vincent’s host family found a pipe in his room and reported to the police. Although it turned out to be a smoking pipe which was not

illegal, it ended Vincent's three years of stay with this host family, and he moved to live with his friend's family until graduating from high school.

4.4. Beyond just companionship: Accompaniment, relatedness, and a sense of belonging

Without parents being around, the participants were given more time and freedom to be with their friends and the good company also prevented them from thoughts of being alone, helped them to focus on adapting to the new environment and inspired them to pull themselves up. Many of the participants ended up becoming close friends with those who were in similar situation, those who were also Korean early study abroad students. In Lydia's case, she became best friends with another early study abroad student from China, and they were the only two international students in the whole school.

More than just accompaniment, the participants experienced deep connection with their new friends who were also early study abroad students and they were able to deeply relate to each other. The shared situation and experience generated a sense of understanding that many of their parents could not provide. They listened and talked with each other about their problems, questions, and issues that they could not share with their parents or their local friends who could not relate to their lives. Yujeong said:

(Korean)말이 잘 통하고 제가 뭐 힘든 거 그런 거 있어도 엄마랑
아빠는 막상 경험하지 못하니까 중국생활을 잘 이해하지는
못하는데 언니들은 그래도 자기가 경험하니까 제가 말하는 걸
이해할 수 있잖아요

(English) It's easy for us to communicate. Even though I had those
difficulties or problems, because my mom and dad didn't experience
themselves, it's hard for them to fully understand my life I had in
China. But my sistas, since they experienced it themselves, they
understand what I'm talking about.

Even though their friends were not able to help solve their problems, sharing
of their own experience, their encouragement and presence were great
comfort to the participants. For Yujeong and Ian, who managed to build a
strong connection with a group of Korean early study abroad students,
having this group of friends also brought them a strong sense of belonging
and they both described that these friends were just like their family. After
high school, Ian and his five friends entered the same university and they
moved to live in a rental apartment together. Ian said that was the most
precious time he had in New Zealand:

That was one of my most precious time spent in New Zealand. I really value the time, the creepy moment, all five of us living together, [and] I really felt I was at home at the time. I was always comfortable. I kind of feel that they're my family members in New Zealand. I feel this place, was really the place that I belong to.

While some participants referred to one friend or a friends' group as their best friends who not only kept them accompanied, but also gave them a sense of relatedness and belonging, other participants did not get to make such friends due to the environment or unstable status. Vincent, who was the only Asian international student in his middle school and high school, said that he was not stressed about fitting in during high school because he met a good friend and was accepted into that friend's circle. He seemed aware of the importance of maintaining his friend group and also mentioned how important the first friend was as it decided one's friend circle perhaps for the entire school career. Although he received much helps from his friends and said that they "made him feel part of the school", he later said that his mother was the only one he could rely on and freely talk to. On the other hand, Mary, who was also the only Asian international student in her high school but lived with an extremely supportive host family, said that she did not have any really close friends in high school, although they were friendly to her. She explained, "I was assuming that it was just different, we're so obviously different." Vincent also said that he was good at making

friends quickly, which he thought was very important for him to adjust to the new environment. Another participant, Kendy, who transferred four times during her school years, described herself as a “relationship person”, because she felt that she really needed to be surrounded by people so as not to feel alone. Both Vincent and Kendy used the phrase “had to” when they were talking about their way of making friends. Kendy said, “I had to meet new people and become friends, which was not easy”.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The main purpose of this study is to understand the changes that early study abroad students experienced in the relationship with their parents while apart, the nature of their newly developed relationships with people around them, and how parents and these new relationships influenced their adjustment in the host country. To accomplish these goals, seven Korean adult returnees who were early study abroad students were individually interviewed in person and an interpretative phenomenological approach was taken to analyze the interview data. The following four themes were emerged from the data: a) Mixed feeling towards parents' sacrifice, b) From physical distance to the distance of heart, c) Supplementary parental roles: new relationships with peers and adults, and d) Beyond just companionship: Accompaniment, relatedness, and a sense of belonging. It was found that the recognition of parents' sacrifice and growing appreciation towards parents had both positive and negative impact on the participants' adjustment and their relationship with their parents. The findings further suggest that parents can be a powerful source of support for adolescents even in the context of overseas separation and parents' physical absence. Also, peers and other adult figures could partly supplement the role of parents by giving guidance, support and control. It is suggested that a balance of guidance and control from other adult figures, and the accompaniment, sense of relatedness and belonging from positive peer

relationships, eased the youths' adjustment in the absence of parents. Based on its findings, the study deepens the understanding of early study abroad students' relationship with parents, peers and other adult figures in the context of physical separation from parents and how the nuances in these relationships can shape them, both positively and negatively while they are studying abroad or even beyond.

From the narratives of the adult returnees in this study who were early study abroad students, parental sacrifice emerged as a key aspect of their relationship with parents in the context of transnational separation. Participants felt a sense of deep appreciation for parents when they began to realize the amount of sacrifice their parents made for them such as financial and even emotional sacrifices. Although realizing parents' sacrifice and appreciation towards parents were also mentioned by Lee's (2014) study on Korean early study abroad students, this study adds to the existing scholarship by showing how participants have come to develop their appreciation towards parents and how it influenced their adjustment over the years. It is worth noting that in this study, the perceived sacrifice of their parents appeared to have both positive and negative impact on their adjustment in the host country as well as their subsequent relationship with their parents. On the one hand, realizing parents' sacrifice and the growing appreciation towards parents motivated the participants to study hard at school. On the other hand, the thought of not wanting to disappoint their

parents and of having to do well to pay back for their parents' sacrifice worked as an emotional burden and added pressure that was sometimes too heavy for some to handle. Although previous studies have found parents' high expectation as one of the stressors experienced by early study abroad students (Zhou, 1998; Cho, 2011; Kim & Okazaki, 2013), findings from this study suggest that it may not just be the high expectation from parents, but also the youths' own sense of obligation to do well that burdened them. This sense of obligation was closely intertwined with their sense of indebtedness towards parents' emotional and financial sacrifice for their success. Sadly for some participants, when they went through some hard times it worked to prevent them from seeking support from their parents, out of the fear that it would only make their parents worry. Such a concern for their parents out of the sense of obligation and indebtedness, further explained why the communication between the early study abroad students and parents decreased over time, as found by previous studies (Kim & Okazaki, 2013; Lee, 2014; Zhou, 1998). The information that the participants mostly chose to conceal from their parents was the difficulties or struggles they were going through. They did not want to worry their parents, or they felt it was unnecessary to share as parents would not be able to help. The participants who felt that their parents were overprotective or controlling also shared less about their romantic relationship with their parents.

It is important to note that the recognition of parental sacrifice and children's sense of obligation is not unique to Korean early study abroad students but was also prevalently found in research with Asian/Korean families and children in transnational or immigrant contexts (Fuligni, 1998; Fuligni, 2002; Kang & Larson, 2014; Phinney, Ong, & Madden, 2000). Studies on Korean American young adults have also demonstrated that these young people tend to positively reconstruct their interactions with their parents (Kang & Larson, 2014; Kang & Shih, 2018; Park, 2005). Like what have been found in present study, the existing literature also suggested that the recognition of parental sacrifice and filial obligation can have both positive impact and negative impact on parent-child relationship and even on the children's psychological well-being (Fuligni, Tseng & Lam, 1999; Fuligni & Pederson, 2002). However, to arrive at a more concrete explanation and deeper understanding on the impact of parental sacrifice and child obligation, further research is needed.

The study found that the participants who maintained a greater extent of sharing due to the receptiveness and openness of their parents, maintained a close relationship despite the distance. This also built a connection between them and their parents which guided them and provided strength to their adjustment to the foreign environment. Given that the participants with parents who are good listeners and understanding already had a closer relationship even before they went to study abroad, it appears

that having a good parent-child bond prior to separation is a potential foundation for a supportive parent-child relationship later even in the context of parental absence. Research on adolescence shows that parents continue to serve as an anchor and a base for their children as children begin to explore the outside world during adolescence (Brown, 1990; Larson & Richards, 1991; Gould & Mazzeo, 1982), which means that even though they may not spend as much time together as they used to as a child, knowing that parents are always there for them when they need them is what holds them psychologically stable (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Ainsworth, 1989). This study also shows that parental support can be a powerful source of support for adolescents even in the context of overseas separation and parents' physical absence. This finding therefore suggests that it is important for parents or potential parents of early study abroad students to be aware of the pivotal role they play to their children's adjustment. It would also be helpful for parents to improve their listening and communicating skills as the result suggests the importance of sharing and communication in order to maintain closeness to their children. In order to improve communication, one suggestion could be to create a common ground between parents and their children by encouraging parents to visit their child's place of study and to meet their peers in person if possible. Provision of knowledge on early study abroad topics such as the culture of the country and the international

education system, can also help parents understand the potential difficulties their child is facing.

Based on the findings, it is also suggested to be aware of the vicious cycle of the students who were having a hard time. Because the students tend to conceal their negative experience from parents, if one had mostly negative experience, there would be less he/she felt like sharing with parents. The lesser amount of sharing would then make it harder for them to receive emotional support from their family, whereas for them, support from family could have made a huge difference in time of adversity.

The study also suggests individual differences in describing and reconstructing their experience with their parents. Because the whole concept of studying abroad as well as the culture in the host country was something new to the parents, parents were less able to provide the needed guidance to their child, especially about the challenges they encountered in the education system. Although all participants have mentioned that their parents were not or would not be able to fully understand their situation and provide them the needed guidance, two of the female participants recurred this experience with more emotions. Not being able to receive needed help and guidance from parents and a decreased sharing of daily life seemed to have brought a greater impact on their emotions and their relationship with parents. They also expressed a feeling of distance from their parents for not being understood as an individual and this feeling became even stronger

after the reunion. The findings might be partly explained by gender difference found in adolescents' autonomy and connectedness in relation to parents (Geuzaine, Debry, & Liesens, 2000). It is also suggested that parents who are considering whether to send their child to study abroad should consider about their children's characteristics in terms of independence and imagine how well their children can adjust to the new environment while apart from parents.

In the context of early study abroad students, peers and other figures took on the important function by providing guidance, support and control. Although in some previous studies (Kim, 2014; Zhou, 1998), the phenomenon that early study abroad students mainly socialized with other early study abroad students was perceived as a sign of being isolated and not able to fit in, the results in this study suggest otherwise. The participants who have formed a strong connection with other early study abroad students actually received greater strength from their relationships with these friends. Being with these friends not only gave them good accompaniment, but also the sense of relatedness and belonging, which greatly fulfilled their emotional needs and reduced their sense of isolation. With this support, they were actually able to seek out and expand their social circles by making friends from other backgrounds, when they became comfortable with their surroundings. In contrast, two of the participants who did not have any friends similar to them throughout the years before college, displayed a

sense of rejection or feelings of being rejected by other Korean peers when they entered college. Based on above findings, this study believes that it is not necessarily a negative sign for early study abroad students to mainly socialize with peers who are in a similar situation as them because the sense of relatedness and belonging reduced their sense of isolation and alienation in the foreign country. Moreover, instead of prioritizing a certain choice of friend group, the youths should be encouraged to socialize with peers that they feel comfortable with, whether they are local students or other early study abroad students.

The above findings, however, should be interpreted with the study's limitations in mind. Findings of this study are based on data of a sample of seven participants with different backgrounds in terms of where they went for study abroad, how long they have been back, and their current age. First, the participants in this study went abroad in different countries. In particular, one of the participants, Yujeong, went to study abroad in China while all the other participants went to English-speaking countries. Because the social and cultural background vary by countries, the different locations of studying abroad also altered individuals' experience. Thus, it deserves more consideration to analyze them together within one study. Second, although the study only includes participants who returned to Korea for no more than three years, the three years' range in the length of returning still matters in terms of how they interpreted their relationships with their parents both in

the past and currently. Lastly, although most of the participants were in their mid-twenties at the time of interview, there is a four years' gap between the youngest and the oldest participant. This age gap of the participants might also have altered the way they reconstructed their past experience with their parents. Despite these limitations, this study still sheds light on the phenomenon of Korean early study abroad students navigating relationships with parents, friends, and other adult figures in the context of parental absence. It also expands our understanding of Korean parent-child relationships by demonstrating the changes the child and their parents experienced in their relationship during oversea separation. There are also likely other aspects of the youths' relationship with parents and other figures that need to be uncovered in future research on early study abroad students which will help solidify understanding and possibly help formulate concrete solutions to aid the adjustment of other population in the context of physical distance from parents.

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Appendix

Appendix 1

Interview questions

➤ Opening:

1. When did you left for studying abroad? (follow-up question: how did you or your family make this decision?)
2. When did you come back? (follow-up question: how did you decide to come back?)

• Being away from parents

1. What was it like for you to be away from your parents?
2. How did you feel when you first left them?
3. What impact do you think this experience had on your ways of developing other relationships?

• Parent-child relationship

1. How was your relationship with your parents before you went to study abroad?
2. How was your relationship with your parents when you were abroad?
(prompt: Were there any changes?)
3. How is your relationship with your parents now?

• Important figures

1. Who do you think the most important people were to you when you were abroad? Please name the top three persons that come to your mind.
 - For each named person:
 - 1) How did you get to know him/her?
 - 2) How do you think he/she helped with your adjustment during your time abroad?
 - 3) What do you think the strengths of this relationship were?
(What characteristics of this relationship do you think make this relationship stronger than other relationships you have?)
 - 4) What were the challenges of this relationship? (prompt: Any conflicts? Any difficulties in maintaining it? What did you have to overcome within this relationship?)
 - 5) How did this relationship change you? (prompt: What were the changes you had after having them in your life? sense of security level, mindset, identity...)
 - 6) If you met him/her in Korea when you were with your parents, would he/she be as important as he/she was?
 - 7) If you met him/her in Korea when you were with your parents, would the nature of the relationship change?
 - If parents are listed:

- 1) In what ways do you think your parents continued playing an important role when you were abroad, even though they were not physically present in your day-to-day life?
 - 2) How did they help you with your adjustment?
 - 3) What were the strengths of your relationship with your parents?
 - 4) What were the challenges of your relationship with your parents?
 - 5) How did this relationship shape you to who you are today?
 - 6) If you were in Korea being with them for the whole time, do you think the nature of your relationship with your parents would be different?
- If a sibling is listed
- 1) How did he/she help with your adjustment?
 - 2) What were the strengths of your relationship with your sibling?
 - 3) What were the challenges of your relationship with him/her?
 - 4) How did this relationship change you?
 - 5) If your parents had been with you together, do you think the nature of your relationship with your sibling would change?
2. Who was the most helpful person to your adjustment (It can be someone you named before, or someone else)?

- 1) In what ways do you think he/she helped you?
 3. If something unexpected happened to you when you were abroad, who would you turn to (It can be someone you named before, or someone else)?
 4. Without those people you mentioned before, do you think that you would adjust to the environment as you did while you were abroad?
- Negative experience
 1. Do you have any negative experience with others? (prompt: Was there anyone that you had a hard time with?)
 - Intimate relationships

May I ask you about your intimate relationships:

 1. Did you develop any intimate relationships such as romantic relationships or deep friendships?
 2. What are the differences between your current relationship and the relationship(s) you had when you were abroad?
 - Attitudes towards early study abroad (supplementary questions)
 1. What are the pros and cons do you think of early study abroad?
 2. Would you consider letting your own children study abroad by themselves in the future?

➤ Closing:

1. Is there anyone else in your time abroad you want to address?
2. I have no further questions, is there anything you want to bring up, or ask about before we finish today's interview?

Appendix 2

Recruitment Online Posting

Hello everyone!

I am a master's student at Seoul National University in the Department of Child Development and Family Studies. I am interested in hearing about your experiences if you have studied abroad, and I am posting here to see if you might be interested in participating in a research interview-

- **About:**

Your experiences with close people when you were abroad

- **Eligibility:**

1. You are Korean and you were raised up in Korea before you went to school in a foreign country.
2. You moved to the foreign country before college.
3. You lived and attended school in a foreign country without your parents for more than 3 years.
4. Your current age is between 18-29.
5. You have returned to Korea and have been back for no more than 3 years.

- **Compensation:**

20,000 won in cash for each interview

- **Time Commitment:**

90-120 minutes per interview; with your permission, there might be a follow-up interview.

- **Your Rights:**

Anonymity, Voluntary basis & Free to withdraw at any time

If you are interested in more information about this study or would like to volunteer, please contact me by email at grace93@snu.ac.kr.

You are also welcome to share this source to other potential participants who may be interested.

Thank you very much!

연구참여자 모집 문건

안녕하십니까? 서울대학교 아동가족학 석사전공 위흔영입니다. 저는 한국인 조기유학생에 관한 연구를 진행하고 있으며 현재 연구참여자를 모집중입니다. 자세한 내용은 다음과 같습니다.

- **연구 목적** : 조기유학생의 가까운 사회적 관계 경험에 대한 이해

<p style="text-align: center;">연구 과제명 한국인 조기유학생의 이차적인 애착경험에 대한 탐구</p> <p style="text-align: center;">연구 책임자명 위흔영(서울대학교 아동가족학과)</p>
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- **참여자 선정조건** :

1. 귀하는 한국인이며 조기유학을 가기 전에 주로 한국에 거주하였습니다.
2. 귀하는 대학교 입학 전에 조기유학을 갔습니다.
3. 귀하는 부모과 동행하지 않고 조기유학을 갔습니다.
4. 귀하의 조기유학기간이 3년 이상이었습니다.
5. 귀하의 연령은 18세~29세입니다.
6. 귀하는 한국으로 귀국하였으며, 귀국한지 3년을 넘지 않았습니다.

- **참여 내용** : 약 90-120분의 인터뷰. 귀하의 허락하에 2 차 면접이 실시 될 수도 있습니다.

- **참여기간 및 장소**

☞ **기간** : 2017년 11월 - 2018년 6월 중 상시

☞ **장소** : 원하시는 장소

• **참여 시 사례** : 감사의 뜻으로 인터뷰당 현금 20,000원

• **참여 방법** : 연구책임자 위흔영(grace93@snu.ac.kr)에게 이메일로 문의

본 연구의 내용에 관한 문의는 다음 연구 담당자에게 하십시오.

*이름: 위흔영 *전화번호: 010-8932-8897

Appendix 4

Recruitment Poster



 Department of Child Development & Family Studies

Ever studied abroad in your youth?

Volunteers needed for a research interview on **Early Study Abroad** students about your unique experiences with people close to you while you were abroad.

Criteria:

1. You are Korean and you were raised up in Korea before you went to school in a foreign country.
2. You moved to the foreign country before college.
3. You lived and attended school in a foreign country without your parents for more than 3 years.
4. Your current age is between 18-29.
5. You have returned to Korea and have been back for no more than 3 years.

Time:

90-120 minutes per interview; with your permission, there might be a follow-up interview.

Compensation:

20,000 won in cash per interview

Anonymity:

Your anonymity will be strictly preserved.

Interested?

Please contact the principle investigator at:

grace93@snu.ac.kr

Know someone who might be?

Please help to pass on the contact details above!

Appendix 5

Information sheet and Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Title of Study: Exploring Korean early study abroad students' secondary attachment experiences in the host country

The Principle Investigator: WEI XINYING (Seoul National University, Dept. of Child Development and Family Studies)

This study is about unaccompanied early study abroad students' (ESAs) secondary attachment experiences. I am inviting you to take part because you are/ were an early study abroad student. The researcher, WEI XINYING (Tel: 010-8932-8897) is going to explain this study to you. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. Before deciding to participate, it is important that you understand why the study is being done and what it will involve. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate. You may talk to your family or friends for advice if you want. If you have any questions now or later, you may contact WEI XINYING at grace93@snu.ac.kr or at 010-8932-8897. Your questions will be answered in

detail.

1. Why the study is being done?

The purpose of this study is to understand ESAs' secondary attachment experiences in the context where parental companion is hard to attain on a daily basis. It also aims to identify positive ways of developing healthy secondary attachment relationships so that the schools, teachers, parents, and the host families are more prepared to facilitate ESAs in the future. This understanding will also help in creating effective programs to respond to their emotional needs as well as foster warm and supportive experiences.

2. How many participants are there?

Approximately 15 people at the age between 18-29 are to participate in this study. All participants are Korean and were raised up in Korea before they went to school in a foreign country. The participants moved to the foreign country before college; they lived and attended school in a foreign country without parents for more than 3 years. The participants have returned to Korea and have been back for no more than 3 years.

3. What procedures shall I go through if I agree to participate?

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following things:

- 1) If you agree to be in this study, we will conduct an interview with you.
- 2) The interview will be scheduled on your convenience.
- 3) The interview will be conducted in a specific place of your choice.
- 4) The interview will include questions about your early study abroad histories, possible secondary attachment figures/relationships during your study abroad, and the ways of developing and maintaining these relationships.
- 5) The interview will take about 90-120 minutes to complete. With your permission, I would also like to voice-record the interview.
- 6) A follow-up interview might be conducted with your permission.
- 7) In the event that you can only communicate effectively in a language that is outside of the interviewer's capabilities (English/Korean/Chinese), an interpreter will be provided on your request.

4. Your expected time commitment for this study is:

It will take about 90-120 minutes / session.

5. Can I withdraw at any point during the study?

You are entitled to withdraw at any point during the process without any loss to you. If you do not feel like participating in the study anymore, please let the researcher know at once.

6. Are there any side effects or risks of being in the study?

You may find some of the questions to be sensitive. You may skip any questions that you do not want to discuss. If you have any questions about potential side effects or risks during the study, you may contact the researcher for further information.

7. Are there any benefits of being in the study?

There are no direct benefits to you. However, the information you provide will help promote our understanding towards early study abroad students.

8. Are there any costs if I refuse to participate?

You have the right not to take part in the study. Your refusal to participate will not result in any loss to you.

9. Will the information obtained from the study be kept confidential?

The researcher conducting this study is WEI XINYING (02-880-8875) from Seoul National University, a master student at the Dept. of Child Development and Family Studies. Every effort will be made by the researcher to preserve your confidentiality. We will not include any identifiable information in any report we may publish. However, the records may be disclosed in cases where the researcher is legally obligated. In addition, without violating the confidentiality, the institutional research board committee have the right to review the research results and collected data to verify the validity and reliability of the study. Your signature below indicates that you have decided to volunteer as a research participant for this study, and that you have read and understood the information provided above.

10. Will I be paid/reimbursed for my participation?

You will be compensated with 20,000 won in cash for each interview as an appreciation for your participation.

11. What if I have questions about this study?

If you have any questions about this study or if problems arise during the study, please feel free to contact the researcher:

Name: WEI XINYING _____ Tel: 010-8932-8897

If you have any other concerns about your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigators, you may contact Seoul National University Institutional Board:

Seoul National University Institutional Board (SNUIRB), Tel: 02-880-5153

Consent

1. I confirm that I have read the information and discussed with the investigator.
2. I understand the risks and benefits of participating in this study and have received answers to any questions I asked.
3. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.
4. I agree that the researchers collect and manage my information obtained from this study in accordance with the existing laws and Institutional Research Board's regulations.
5. I agree that my information which is kept confidential, can be reviewed by the principle investigator during the research process as well as for result management; my information can also be used for surveys conducted by the health authorities, the school authorities, and the Institutional Research Board Committee.
6. I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, without any cost.
7. I understand that I have the right to ask for an interpreter for my interview and the interpreter will have access to my interview contents, only through the interpretation of the interview.
8. By signing this letter, I also consent to having my interview voice-record ed.
9. My signature indicates that I have received a copy of this consent form

and I will keep it until the end of this study.

Participant's Name Signature and Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

Researcher's Name Signature and Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

The Principle Investigator's Name Signature and Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

In some cases

Witness Name Signature and Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

연구참여자용 설명서 및 동의서

연구 과제명 : 한국인 조기유학생의 이차적인 애착경험에 대한 탐구

연구 책임자명 : 위흔영 (서울대학교 아동가족학, 석사과정)

이 연구는 비 동반 조기유학생의 이차적인 애착경험에 대한 연구입니다. 귀하는 조기유학생 이었기 때문에 이 연구에 참여하도록 권유 받았습시다. 이 연구를 수행하는 서울대학교 소속의 연구원 위흔영 (전화번호: 010-8932-8897)이 귀하에게 이 연구에 대해 설명해 줄 것입니다. 이 연구는 자발적으로 참여 의사를 밝히신 분에 한하여 수행 될 것이며, 귀하께서는 참여 의사를 결정하기 전에 본 연구가 왜 수행되는지 그리고 연구의 내용이 무엇과 관련 있는지 이해하는 것이 중요합니다. 다음 내용을 신중히 읽어보신 후 참여 의사를 밝혀 주시길 바라며, 필요하다면 가족이나 친구들과 의논해 보십시오. 만일 어떠한 질문이 있다면 담당 연구원이 자세하게 설명해 줄 것입니다.

2. 이 연구는 왜 실시합니까?

이 연구의 목적은 부모와 일상생활을 함께 하지 못하는 조기유학생의 이차적인 애착 경험을 이해하는 데 있습니다. 조기유학생의 이차적인 애착을 이해함으로써 그

들에게 정신적인 지지를 제공할 수 있는 프로그램을 만드는 데 도움이 될 것입니다.

2. 얼마나 많은 사람이 참여합니까?

약 3년 이상의 조기유학 경험이 있는 18세-29세 한국인 15 명이 참여할 것입니다. 모든 참여자는 조기유학을 가기 전에 주로 한국에 거주하였고, 대학교 입학 전에 부모와 동행하지 않고 조기유학을 갔습니다. 현재는 귀국하여 한국에 살고 있으며, 귀국한지 3년이 넘지 않은 경우만 포함됩니다.

3. 만일 연구에 참여하면 어떤 과정이 진행됩니까?

만일 귀하가 참여의사를 밝혀 주시면 다음과 같은 과정이 진행될 것입니다.

- 1) 귀하와 면담을 실시 할 것입니다.
- 2) 면접 일정은 귀하의 편이에 따라 조정됩니다.
- 3) 인터뷰는 원하시는 장소에서 진행됩니다.
- 4) 인터뷰는 초기 조기유학을 하게 된 과정, 외국 유학 중 경험한 이차적인 애착 관계/유대 관계, 그리고 이러한 관계를 발전시키고 유지하는 방법에 대한 질문을 포함합니다.
- 5) 인터뷰는 완료하는 데 약 90-120분이 걸립니다. 귀하의 허락하에 인터뷰 음성을 녹음할 수 있습니다.
- 6) 귀하의 허락하에 2 차 면접이 실시 될 수도 있습니다.
- 7) 인터뷰는 연구자가 소통가능한 언어인 영어/한국어/중국어 중, 귀하가 응

답하기 편한 언어로 진행됩니다. 귀하가 그 외의 언어로 진행하기 원하는 경우, 통역이 제공됩니다.

4. 연구 참여 기간은 얼마나 됩니까?

약 90-120분이 소요될 것입니다.

5. 참여 도중 그만두어도 됩니까?

예, 귀하는 언제든지 어떠한 불이익 없이 참여 도중에 그만 둘 수 있습니다. 만일 귀하가 연구에 참여하는 것을 그만두고 싶다면 담당 연구원이나 연구 책임자에게 즉시 말씀해 주십시오.

6. 부작용이나 위험요소는 없습니까?

민감한 질문이 있을 수도 있습니다. 대답하고 싶지 않은 질문은 건너 뛰어도 됩니다. 만일 연구 참여 도중 발생할 수 있는 부작용이나 위험 요소에 대한 질문이 있으면 담당 연구원에게 즉시 문의해 주십시오.

7. 이 연구에 참여시 참여자에게 이득이 있습니까?

귀하가 이 연구에 참여하는데 있어서 직접적인 이득은 없습니다. 그러나 귀하가 제

공하는 정보는 조기유학생에 대한 이해를 증진하는데 도움이 될 것입니다.

8. 만일 이 연구에 참여하지 않는다면 불이익이 있습니까?

귀하는 본 연구에 참여하지 않을 자유가 있습니다. 또한, 귀하가 본 연구에 참여하지 않아도 귀하에게는 어떠한 불이익도 없습니다.

9. 연구에서 얻은 모든 개인 정보의 비밀은 보장됩니까?

개인정보관리책임자는 서울대학교 아동가족학 석사과정 위훈영(02-880-8755)입니다. 저희는 이 연구를 통해 얻은 모든 개인 정보의 비밀 보장을 위해 최선을 다할 것입니다. 이 연구에서 얻어진 개인 정보가 학회지나 학회에 공개 될 때 귀하의 이름과 다른 개인 정보는 사용되지 않을 것입니다. 그러나 만일 법이 요구하면 귀하의 개인정보는 제공될 수도 있습니다. 또한 모니터 요원, 점검 요원, 생명윤리심의위원회는 연구참여자의 개인 정보에 대한 비밀 보장을 침해하지 않고 관련규정이 정하는 범위 안에서 본 연구의 실시 절차와 자료의 신뢰성을 검증하기 위해 연구 결과를 직접 열람할 수 있습니다. 귀하가 본 동의서에 서명하는 것은, 이러한 사항에 대하여 사전에 알고 있었으며 이를 허용한다는 동의로 간주될 것입니다.

10. 이 연구에 참가하면 댓가가 지급됩니까?

연구 참여시 감사의 뜻으로 인터뷰당 현금 20,000원이 증정될 것입니다.

11. 연구에 대한 문의는 어떻게 해야 됩니까?

본 연구에 대해 질문이 있거나 연구 중간에 문제가 생길 시 다음 연구 담당자에게 연락하십시오.

이름: 위흔영 (WEI XINYING) 전화번호: 010-8932-8897

만일 어느 때라도 연구참여자로서 귀하의 권리에 대한 질문이 있다면 다음의 서울대학교 생명윤리심의위원회에 연락하십시오.

서울대학교 생명윤리심의위원회 (SNUIRB) 전화번호: 02-880-5153

동 의 서

1. 나는 이 설명서를 읽었으며 담당 연구원과 이에 대하여 의논하였습니다.
2. 나는 위험과 이득에 관하여 들었으며 나의 질문에 만족할 만한 답변을 얻었습니다.
3. 나는 이 연구에 참여하는 것에 대하여 자발적으로 동의합니다.
4. 나는 이 연구에서 얻어진 나에 대한 정보를 현행 법률과 생명윤리심의위원회 규정이 허용하는 범위 내에서 연구자가 수집하고 처리하는데 동의합니다.
5. 나는 담당 연구자나 위임 받은 대리인이 연구를 진행하거나 결과 관리를 하는 경우와 보건 당국, 학교 당국 및 서울대학교 생명윤리심의위원회가 실태 조사를 하는 경우에는 비밀로 유지되는 나의 개인 신상 정보를 직접적으로 열람하는 것에 동의합니다.
6. 나는 언제라도 이 연구의 참여를 철회할 수 있고 이러한 결정이 나에게 어떠한 해도 되지 않을 것이라는 것을 압니다.
7. 나는 인터뷰를 위해 통역을 요청할 권리가 있으며, 통역사도 기밀 유지에 관해 숙지하고 있음을 압니다.
8. 나는 인터뷰하는 동안 인터뷰 내용을 녹음하여 음성 파일로 저장하는 것에 동의합니다.
9. 나의 서명은 이 동의서의 사본을 받았다는 것을 뜻하며 연구 참여가 끝날 때까지 사본을 보관하겠습니다.

연구참여자 성명 서명 날짜 (년/월/일)

동의서 받은 연구원 성명 서명 날짜 (년/월/일)

연구책임자 성명 서명 날짜 (년/월/일)

만일 있을 경우

임회인 성명 서명 날짜 (년/월/일)

Abstract in Korean

국문초록

한국인 조기유학생의 부모자녀관계 및 사회관계 적응 경험에 대한 연구

위훈영

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본 연구는 해외 조기 유학생들이 부모로부터 떨어져 있는 동안 부모와의 관계 변화 및 주변의 사람들과 새롭게 형성한 관계의 성격, 그리고 부모님 및 새롭게 형성된 관계가 어떻게 그들의 현지 국가 적응에 영향을 미치는지 알아보려고 하였다. 이를 위해 7 명의 조기 해외 유학으로부터 귀국한 한국인 학생들을 대상으로 각각 대면 인터뷰를 진행하였으며, 해석학적 현상학 접근 방식을 분석에 활용하였다. 4 개의 주제가 데이터로부터 도출되었으며 결과는 다음과 같다. a) 부모의 희생에 대한 복합적인 감정, b) 물리적 거리에서 마음의 거리로, c) 부모의 역할을 보충하기: 또래와 성인들과의 새로운 관계, 그리고 d) 단순한 우정을 넘어: 동지애, 연결됨, 그리고 소속감. 위와 같은 결과는 부모의 부재라는 상황 속에서도 또래와 다른 성인들이 보호, 지원 및 통제를 수행함으로써 부모의 역할을 보충했음을 보여준다. 또한 그럼에도 여전히 부모의 지원은 연구참여자들에게 강력한 지지원임을 나타낸다.

연구참여자들은 부모의 희생에 대해 복합적인 감정을 갖고 있었다. 그들은 부모의 희생을 감사히 여겼으며, 이는 성공해야

한다는 동기를 부여했다. 그러나 다른 한편으로는, 부모를 실망시키고 싶지 않다는 마음으로 인해 학업에 대해 강한 부담감과 압박을 느꼈다. 몇몇 연구참여자들의 경우, 부모님의 희생에 대한 감사함은 오히려 그들이 어려움에 처했을 때 부모로부터 도움을 구하는 것을 막는 역할을 수행했는데, 이는 그러한 행위가 부모를 걱정시킬 것이라고 판단했기 때문이다.

7명 중 5명의 연구참여자들은 시간이 지날수록 부모와의 교류가 줄어들었다고 보고했다. 연구참여자들은 부모에게 자신의 어려운 상황을 숨겼는데, 이는 부모님을 걱정하지 않도록 만드는 것이 그들의 최우선이였기 때문이다. 그들의 부모 또한 먼 거리로 인해 문제를 해결해 줄 수 없었으므로, 몇몇 연구참여자들은 부모에게 그들이 겪는 어려움에 대해 말하는 것이 불필요하다고 느꼈다. 특히 두 명의 여성 연구참여자들은 부모님의 보호 없이 의사를 결정하는 것에 큰 어려움을 느꼈다. 부모님에게서 지원과 보호를 받지 못하는 것, 그리고 일상을 공유하는 시간의 감소는 여성 연구참여자들의 정서와 부모님과의 관계에 비교적 더 큰 영향을 미쳤다. 물리적인 거리로 인해 연구참여자들이 부모님과의 관계를 개선시킬 여지가 적었으며, 부모자녀 관계를 악화시키기도 했다. 그러나 동시에 부모에 대한 수용력과 개방성 덕분에 꾸준히 교류를 지속하여 부모님과 친밀한 관계를 유지한 연구참여자들 또한 존재했다. 이러한 사실은 부모가 자녀와의 의사소통 방식을 개선해야 할 필요성을 제시한다. 또한 현지 국가나 그들의 교육 시스템 등 부모 스스로 자녀와 대화할 수 있는 공통점을 지속적으로 발굴해야 할 필요가 있음을 가리킨다.

연구참여자들의 부모보다 현지 환경에 더 익숙한 또래들은 부모가 제공할 수 없는 유용하고 적절한 지원을 제공함으로써

연구참여자들의 정착을 촉진시켰다. 호스트 가족이나 교회 사람들과 같은 성인들 또한 연구참여자들의 적응에 큰 영향을 끼쳤다. 이러한 성인들은 도움을 제공할 뿐만 아니라 연구참여자들이 현지에 적응하고 비행(非行)에 빠지지 않도록 통제하는 역할 또한 수행하였다.

비록 조기 유학 시절 내내 외로움을 느꼈음에도, 연구참여자들에게 있어서 또래와의 좋은 관계는 단순히 좋은 친구 이상을 의미한 것으로 드러났다. 또래로부터 얻게 된 연결됨의 감정, 그리고 소속감은 연구참여자들이 부모의 부재 속에서도 효과적으로 적응할 수 있도록 도왔다. 전체적으로 본 연구는 조기 해외 유학생들이 부모의 부재라는 상황 속에서 부모를 비롯한 친구들 및 성인과의 관계에 대한 탐색을 조명하였다. 청소년 조기 유학생 뿐만 아니라 부모와 물리적으로 떨어진 상황에 처한 청소년들을 위한 더 나은 지원 방안에 관한 후속 연구를 제언한다.

주요어: 한국인 조기 유학생, 청소년, 부모 자녀 관계, 다국적 가정, 초국적 가족, 사회적 관계

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